

# In Our Own Words



## **Diverse Stories From Diverse Lives**

Newport/Mesa ProLiteracy

**International Literacy Day**

September 10, 2015

**Volume VIII**

We dedicate this edition of *In Our Own Words* to two of our long time volunteers.... Both of whom left us too early but remain in our thoughts.

## **Beverly Canton**

Beverly worked in the office for eight years and brought with her a smile that warmed everyone's heart.



## **Bruce McKeag**

Bruce was a tutor for several years and then, in Bruce style, realized that he could help even more people by teaching a class (and then two). He touched so many lives with his dedication and empathy.



## From Our Library Director

Literacy transcends its literal definition as the ability to read and write. Literacy and its many rewards are much more than reading and writing. Improved literacy skills benefit everyone in our community regardless of age, race, gender, or background. The economic benefits of literacy match its social and political importance. It is a great equalizer, and an important reminder that full liberty cannot be achieved without literacy.

Literacy also brings joy: the joy of reading a good book, or reading a story to a child. It brings the simple joy of being able to find your way in a new place, or ordering from a menu. It promotes the joy of feeling confident and competent in school, at work, or at home.

The Newport Beach Public Library recognizes that literacy is a cornerstone of the public library. We are proud of our partnership with Newport/Mesa ProLiteracy.

*Tim Hetherton*  
*Director of Library Services*  
*Newport Beach Public Library*

## From Our President

Today we join millions of people around the world in celebration of International Literacy Day. This is a day to honor those who are striving to improve their literacy skills, and to raise public awareness of the importance of literacy to individuals, families and our society. The collection of heart-felt stories come from those who have met the challenge head-on. Enjoy their effort and salute their courage. We are proud of them all!

*Jason Brady*  
*Newport/Mesa ProLiteracy*  
*Advisory Board President*

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**Editor’s note:** All writings are published as they were written however some stories may have been edited due to space limitations. We hope this does not detract from the reader’s (or writer’s) pleasure.

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## In Our Own Words 2015

# Hiking Up Vernal Fall

*Sylvia Chiu*

I opened my eyes and realized that it was already morning. I was excited and couldn't wait to hike up the mountain and witness the powerful Vernal Fall, one of the mighty falls in Yosemite National Park. Currently, we were camping at Yosemite Valley campground, and trees as tall as skyscrapers were everywhere, providing shade for the campers. The temperature was quite cool in the morning at the bottom of the valley even though the sun was already up.

The beginning of the trail was quite flat, so it didn't seem very hard. As we hiked farther, the ups and downs of the trail and the baking sun made it a little more laborious. After all the resting and panting, we finally arrived at the Vernal Fall footbridge, the first photographic spot that attracts hikers to linger. I strode over to the bridge, and a tingling sensation rippled through my body when I looked down at the foamy water gushing through boulders beneath the bridge. Quickly, my eyes moved over to the splendid look of Vernal Fall; the substantial amount of water was cascading down from the wide opened granitic cliff, forming a huge white water curtain, and the seething water continued pounding downstream through countless boulders. After our first taste of Vernal Fall, we continued our hike. Now the torrential river was on the left side of our trail, and we could constantly hear the raging water. As we were getting closer to the waterfall, the trail became damper and more slippery. In some area of the trail, I could see moss growing on the brownish granitic wall. Within minutes, the powerful Vernal Fall appeared in front of my eyes; the abundant amount of water roaring down vertically from the wide opened mountain top was like endless trains thundering by.

After a nice rest, we started to drag our weary body back to the campsite. Although we were exhausted, we were all satisfied with our accomplishment witnessing the powerful Vernal Fall. It was such a spectacular scene that I would never forget!

# Pure Joy

*Hyejung Song*

A few weeks ago, I got an urgent call from my friend and she asked me to pray for her husband. She said that he had a sudden heart attack and his condition was so serious that he was waiting for a donor to give him a heart. I was shocked because he had always stayed in good health, was active and energetic. I felt that she was scared and worried. She suffered from all the painful and dreadful fears. I empathized with her fears and worries as well.

However, I encouraged her by saying that she never has to face her fears alone because G-d always with her and his strength is there for her. No matter how dark his days seemed, we kept praying for him with all our hearts.

Two days later, a miracle happened. They found a donor and my friend's husband went to surgery to receive the heart. The surgery took a long time because it was a delicate and difficult process. After the surgery, his pain was so severe that he was given many medicines and sedatives. Slowly he managed to get through the difficult days and finally we watched him begin to get better.

My friend confessed to me that she believed the heart was a gift from G-d. After she reflected, she considered this medical emergency as a precious moment because all her family members and friends united and kept praying for her husband. It was really pure joy because she thought that her husband had been reborn again. She had seen how her family members loved each other despite all their difficulties and it made her give thanks to G-d.

The Bible says that "Consider it pure joy, my brothers. Whenever you face trials of many kinds." (James 1:2)

Considering trials of many kinds as pure joy is not the way the world usually looks at problems. The world says to do everything you can to avoid problems. However, I find there is no way to avoid every problem, no matter how hard I try. The blessing of patience can be learned from an illness. I watched my friend's patience and faith grow during this difficult time. G-d teaches us many things through our problems and struggles. He also use them to draw us closer to him. After witnessing my friend's crisis, I truly believe problems are able to

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help us learn about pure joy. I can see G-d's light shining through on these dark days.



# Letter for the Return to My Sicilian Roots

*Stefan Samodumov*

Hello Mr. James and Mrs. Shirley W.

I am Stefano Manfredi, the son of Elio Maria Manfredi from Corleone, Italy.

In 1958, my father moved with all his family and cousins from Italy to New York, USA.

In the beginning, they spent much time together and they were very happy because they lived together in one house with two floors. My dad told me that for lunch and dinner they gathered, and my mother would be very angry with the children because they were hiding and making mischief, and causing her to clean up the whole house. When mom was angry, she bit my father's hand, so the children understood that they must be good and play quietly. When the food, the dish, was delicious, my father touched his finger to mom's cheek, and all the children understood and laughed.



The Italian people, every time they are talking, use hand gestures. Also, this is a more common way to speak another language. The Sicilians do not speak very often; they understood each other with looks and gestures. Although he taught me and I tried to learn the Sicilian gestures, I remember that my father told me that I would never be a true Sicilian because when I talk, I am hard as wood. My father remembered, with much love, many of these gestures until the last of his days. Do you remember some of these gestures?

My dad, Elio Manfredi, spoke of your family many times and I saw different cards from Christmas, New Years, and Easter. The last postcard from Christmas, I knew that Mrs. Shirley made it for my father and me. On my father's desk, I saw different photos with your

family, children and grandchildren. I saw as they grew up in the photographs, in the holidays of different years.

My dad, many times, spoke with me about your family, and told me many interesting stories of your family life. So, I decided to send this letter to you and maybe visit you, because I want you to also tell me your stories, the best moments and hand gestures. And if you can, I would like to learn and compare with you the American's way to speak, please.

If you want to write to me, or call me, I would be so pleased because I want to see my father's cousins in the USA, and speak with you like my father did before.

I will send you a photo of my father. Do you remember this place?



## Limpy

*Jessy Chen*

We haven't seen Limpy again in our alley, stopping on his favorite spot up high the electric wire, settling his feathers, yelling, asking for food, eating, chasing other birds away and pooping.

I did not like Limpy too much. Every early morning, he acted as an alarm clock and the loud "Ah-Ah-Ah" sound woke me up without a miss. When I first saw him, he was a strapping bird. He had a magnificent physique; his black feathers shone under the sun, his beak was sharp as if he could tear everything into pieces. When I was watching him, he watched me back with his black eyes aggressively as if he was saying: "I am the king of this area, I take charge of here." The only shortcoming he had was his right claw. It was curved. He mainly stood on his left claw and tapped the right one on the surface continuously until he found a position where he felt comfortable. My husband then named him "Limpy".

My husband is an animal-loving person with a warm heart. When Limpy was asking for food, he never refused. After several times of feeding, Limpy expected this treatment all the time. Everyday, he flied over on time once we show up in the kitchen. As soon as my husband threw some food on the ground, he swooped down to enjoy his meal

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immediately. If an incoming bird did not know the rule and tried to eat with him, he would yell at him and chase him away. If he had leftovers, he hid them underneath the neighbor's roof which was his food storage. He did not leave right away after his meal. He stayed on the electric wire, watching, digesting the food and marking his territory with his excretion. If some days we did not have food for him, he yelled loudly for a long time as if he was threatening: "Where is my meal? Hand over my meal right away!" I did not want to be threatened, so I tried to stop my husband from feeding him.



His drama was continuing everyday. One day, he came over with a crow which looked smaller than him. They probably lived on the palm tree a block away. Sometimes they'd sit on the neighbor's roof, extending their wings under the sun and spending a relaxing afternoon.

We called him "friend" when he appeared nearby. My husband missed him if he did not show up for a while. One day, an unusual noise erupted. Two new crows appeared. Limpy and his company yelled loudly to them. The chaos ended when the two crows flew away. But the fight did not finish. I still heard noise in the following days. And Limpy did not come by.

Finally he showed up. He looked tired, his beautiful feathers bald in some spots, he even could not touch his right claw on the surface any more but crouched his whole body on the wire. This time, I did not stop my husband from feeding him.

The last time we saw Limpy, the feathers around his neck were missing. Other ragged feathers were grey colored, trembling in the wind as if they would drop off in any second. He was sad and looked like an old man. Even though, he refused to show his misery to us. His head still kept up high as if he was still the king. But we knew it wouldn't last long.

Predictably, he disappeared. The two new crows started coming by every day and my husband is also giving them food.

But I know they are not Limpy.

# My Husband's Birthday Cake

Amy Gouvis

This year for my husband's 43rd (he made me say that) birthday I decided to surprise him with a homemade birthday cake. Whoa, I went to the market and I was overwhelmed with all of the choices of cake mixes. Chocolate, vanilla, yellow, spicy and Angel's food cake. What to buy? Which one should I choose I asked myself?

I simply could not decide which mix to buy so I did the logical thing and bought two of them; should I have bought them all I wondered? I reduced it to two and bought a chocolate mix and an Angel's food cake mix. I thought this was a sure thing. Wouldn't you? I mean my husband LOVES chocolate...I do too and that white fluffy cake looked so good on the box.



I decided to make my husband's favorite flavor, a chocolate cake first. I followed the instructions on the box explicitly except for one thing. The directions said to use the electric mixer but I decided to just mix it by hand. Oh, oh, that was my downfall. I worked so hard on this cake hoping to surprise my husband but the darn cake went in the oven filling the container about one inch from the bottom and after the prescribed time frame it came out maybe a half inch taller than when it went in the oven. It didn't look right and I was a bit upset. Shouldn't it be like three inches tall, I thought?

So, the chocolate cake from hell was something that actually tasted pretty good but it looked like something the cat dragged in... and stepped on a few times by that fat cat. I am easy to please and I liked it but my old fart tried it and spit it out but immediately apologized to me and thanked me for my efforts! Most women would have been annoyed by his actions but he is a very discerning person and I took it as constructive criticism.

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“Now what?” I thought. What do I bake? Well, I only had one mix left. And this time I followed the directions to the letter! Something about letting it rise while holding it upside down still eludes me but I did it, it worked and he loved my cake!!! I was so happy. I loved the cake so much as it was so light and fluffy, it truly was from heaven!

We couldn't eat the entire cake but fortunately two of my girlfriends visited the next day and we ate the entire remaining portion of cake. Of course, I told them there were no calories in the cake. Did I exaggerate? Actually, I ate most of it.

So now you know the story of my cake mixes and the Angel food cake mix experience.



## A Tour to Segerstrom Center for the Arts

*Sylvia Chiu*

The center was named Segerstrom Center for the Arts to honor the great contributions of the Segerstrom family. The beginning of the story started with a dream of a group of Orange County community leaders who wanted to build a world-class performing art center locally right in Orange County and followed by the land donation from the Segerstrom family. Not only each theater was carefully designed but also the materials for the chairs and walls inside the theaters were specially chosen to ensure acoustics. The center hosts many performances from different places, even internationally! We were told that the language of the signs on backstage would be changed accordingly so the performers would not have any problems following the signs.



# Tire Flat

*Soni Choi*

Last Friday, I went to Laguna Hills for celebrate my oldest son's friend's birthday. However, I was so angry at that time, because my oldest son (Hyunwoo) did not want to go there with his brother. I have two sons, they are doing well and play together well, but, from time to time they fight each other too. It was so endurable for me, mom. I hope that they trust each other, help each other. Because, if I die, nobody here, only just two brothers.



Anyway, because of the anger, I drove so aggressively. As a result, I did not check the obstacle, my car tire was flat. I called my husband, and he exchanged the spare tire. I spent over \$300 buying new tire. I regret why I drove so aggressively. Even though, nobody hurt, but I spent big amount money instead of my anger.



# Father's Day

*Crystal Huang*

Every third Sunday in June is Father's Day in USA, it is different from Taiwan. It's every August eighth in Taiwan. Actually, Father's Day is not a traditional holiday in Taiwan. Why it is set on August eighth is because the pronunciation of August eighth sounds like "POP", therefore, businessmen created the day to become Father's Day.



That was good for business.

I thought I would tell a little bit about my dad. He was of medium build, dark and a responsible man. He was a businessman,

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always busy doing business in the daytime, social at nighttime. He taught us by his personal behavior. He was serious and straight and never played with us when he was home. However, I love him deeply.

Of course, I love my parents, or rather, I love my dad more than I love my mom. Because my dad educated us in the importance of fairness with no pampering, no favors. He altered his personality into very calm and no longer serious, when he retired. We started being closer, laughing, and chatting between him and us until he died. He died in 1995. I have wished that my dad could appear in my dreams often, although, he just appeared a few times.

I am so grateful for having had such a good father.



### Mission Inn

*Mariko Myogoji*

The Mission Inn is one of the places I like very much. Mission Inn is a hotel in Riverside. My tutor, Milvi told me about that. My husband and I went there during the Christmas season. They have great decorations of the season. When I saw the view, I was very excited. It was more than Disney Land! I had never seen anything like that. I was exactly in a fantasy world. There were a lot of Cinderella Carriages on streets. Of course, my husband and I rode it. I felt like a princess. If you've never been there, I recommend you to go in

the Christmas season.

On the next month, Milvi took me to Riverside. We had lunch at a restaurant which had funny decorations. After that we joined a tour at Mission



Inn. When I couldn't listen what a guide said, Milvi helped me to understand. The guide explained about history and luxurious antiques which were collected by a Founder, Frank Augustus Miller.



The stained glass windows at the church were made by “Tiffany”. And many presidents visited there. There is Taft’s big chair. Before I went there I had read about Taft at the “News for You”, so it was very interesting for me. I could enjoy the Mission Inn thanks to Milvi.



## My Life

*Laura Ransom*

I am from Mexico City. My life was okay; I was single with a good job and a great family. I came to the USA California for vacation. On my vacation I met a man and I fell in love with him. After time passed, we got married. I came to live with him in California, but I didn't speak English. However, my husband knew Spanish and spoke with me very well. I knew I needed to learn English, so I went to OCC to get ESL classes, but these classes were always full so I needed to wait. I stayed at home and supported my husband raising three girls, putting my education on hold. My husband and I decide to speak Spanish with my girls so they would know two languages. Living in the USA is very good because we have freedom that others countries don't have. I love living here and I learned a lot about others countries because California has people all over the world and has a lot of different culture.

People say that living here is a dream because they have freedom; I think it's true, but what people forget is that you need to work hard to get what you want.

Living here for so many years, I learned to speak English for the most part, but my pronunciation is bad and sometimes people don't understand what I say. I knew that if I decided to live here I would

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need to fit in, speak better, read, and have better job. Having three girls made me busy and left me with no free time because my kids had very busy lives. They needed to go school, play sports, and have a little time to play with their friends. My girls always had sports to do. At first, I put the three girls on the same sports, swim and karate, so I didn't need to drive to different places. They did ballet, gymnastic, piano, hip-hop, soccer, volleyball, basketball. When they got older they decided to do different sports. My oldest daughter always liked to swim because she started swimming when she was 7 year old, so she joined the swim team for 4 years when she went to high school. She needed to swim at 5:30 A.M. and swim again after school at 3:00 P.M. I needed to get up to help my girl with the things she needed to take to the school and I had to prepare her lunch and drop her off at the school at 5:30 A.M. I would then come back home to prepare breakfast and lunches for my other two girls and take them to school too. My husband helped me take the girls to practice when he wasn't busy with his job. I always helped at my girls' schools in their classrooms and I got a small job teaching kindergarten Spanish at Montessori school. So yet again I had no time to go to school and learn English.

Now since two of my girls are at a university and my youngest daughter is in high school, I think is time for me. I was talking with my friend Sasha (she is from Russia) and told her about wanting to get a better job for myself and to speak English better, but I am too old to go to school. My friend told me about the adult learners section of the Newport Beach Library (Newport/Mesa ProLiteracy). Immediately, I went to the orientation and assessment and I was able to get a tutor. She is an American teacher who listened to my poor English, yet still understood me. I gained confidence and became motivated to study English more because she always encouraged and praised me.

I feel thankful to live in this country and to have people in this program that help me with the language and culture. Thank you very much.

(My daughter proof read my story, but I hope to soon be able to write entirely on my own.)

# My Name

*Jeonghee (Jenny) Moon*

As a lot of Korean parents did in the 1960's and 70's, my parents went to a naming place, and a naming person picked a good name that would bring good luck to the baby. It is very funny that even though my husband was born in Junju and I was born in Seoul, we got our names from the same person. We were surprised when we found out that both of us got our names from the same person who must have been one of the famous professional naming people in those days.

My name is one of the common names that Korean girls were given at that time; therefore, I always had at least someone who had the same name in my class in my school days. I admit that when I was little I wished I had a better name that was fancier and not as common as my given name even though my last name is not a common last name so there is no way that people will confuse my name with other's.

As a lot of Korean words are from Chinese words, two people could have the same name but the names could have different meanings. My name has its own unique meaning. It is a two-syllable word: Jeong-Hee. 'Jeong' means straight, upright, honest, or right-minded. 'Hee' means glad, happy, pleased, or delighted. Altogether, it probably reflects my parents' wish that their daughter live an upright and happy life. As I get older and mature, I am really grateful that my parents chose my name for me. All my life I've tried to live up to their expectations. When I show my name with Chinese characters, most people agree that my name really fits my personality and that I am just like my name — upright and happy.

You might not like the name that your parents chose for you. It



may sound old-fashioned or too common that everybody else has it; however, if you think about the time that your parents were so excited to have you and tried very hard to find the perfect name that would bring good luck to you, you would appreciate that you have your name and understand that your name is so special to you. Being a parent myself, I went through the exact same naming process for my own son and daughter. My

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husband and I spent days and nights agonizing to find a perfect name for Jake and Jadie. When we name our children, we are not just picking out letters, we are also giving them our wishes and hopes that they would live a happy life.



### A Trip to Hawaii

*Shamcy and Reza Movahedi*

In June 2015 we traveled to Honolulu, Hawaii for 5 days. As now we are celebrating our 50th anniversary of marriage, our daughter and our son arranged this trip and they paid all expenses for it.

Our flight was from LAX in Los Angeles to Honolulu which took more than 5 hours. Our hotel was one block away from Waikiki beach, so we had very easy and quick access to the beach as well as the ocean.

On the second day of the trip, we had an interesting full day tour, with guide, to the “Polynesian Cultural Center,” which is 50 miles away from Honolulu. It is best place to learn about Polynesia, which includes 6 islands: Hawaii, Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and Aoterra. It is a very large park and there were many different shows to introduce life in that part of the world.



On the third day, we went to downtown of Honolulu and visited a new and luxe shopping mall.

On fourth day, we had another full day guided tour around the island. During the tour, we experienced nice views of ocean side and green and bright forests. Also we visited “Dole Plantation,” which is one of the world’s largest pineapple fields in the world.

On the fifth day, our trip finished and we returned to Los Angeles by flight.

Conclusion: Hawaii is a fantastic place to visit, even for more than once.

# Summer!

*Zhanna Karabayeva*

I would like to tell you about my summer holiday. All the people enjoy the summer holiday very much and certainly my kids and I are no exception. My kids and I are so happy to have a rest after a whole year of hard work and study. We like to travel during our summer holidays. Sometimes we go to other states or other countries, or sometimes we have guests from Kazakhstan and spend time visiting theaters, museums, and parks. We like everything!

But most of all I love a calm vacation.

We are lucky. We live near the ocean. So we have a great opportunity to go to the beach every day. My kids also like to have a rest at the ocean side best of all.

We like to walk along the shore, feed the seagulls, swim, and play with a beach ball. My kids like to swim with boogie boards on the waves. They also like to walk on the rocky shores and look at the living things. At this time I can lie down and read a book or just lie back down and dream.

And at the end of the day we love to watch the sunset and make wishes.



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### **A Dream Summer**

*Carolina Henriquez-Sanguinetti*

I was wondering what would be a dream summer for me. Of course, just being next to the ocean, not any ocean just the Pacific or the Mediterranean sea.

I love going for a walk along the sea shore, feeling the sea breeze and the warm sun on my skin. I love swimming but I am not a good swimmer, better to say, I do not swim because I am afraid of the water covering my face.

I used to be very daring when I was a teenager, I used to jump into the swimming pool and also in the ocean. One day, a big wave in the Pacific Ocean got me high and finally throw me head down. I lost conscious. I woke up somewhere else on the beach. Since then, I am afraid of water covering my face.

Since that incident, I just stay at the shore feeling the cold water in my legs but not getting deeper in the water.

I really enjoy summer because I can have different fresh fruits, also I love the smell of peaches.

This summer, I do not have definite plans. I just go day by day enjoying the beautiful weather in the sunny California.



### **Newport Beach Photographic Exhibition**

*Sylvia Y. Aceves*

Two weeks ago I saw here in the Public Library a exposition of pictures about age (old people). I was impressed with a man's hands who all his life worked in boats. I could see how hard was his work.

Another picture I really liked was an old lady who every weekend was in the plaza with her puppet (also an old lady dressed just like her). She was doing that to entertain the children on the street; imagine the energy she had to get dressed so nicely.

You can see the age of the people from the wrinkled skin on the hands, not everyone's hands seemed happy.

# Yale's Trip to America

*Yumi Kudo*

My dog's name is Yale. He is an eleven years old brown dachshund. He has two sisters and he was born in Gifu-ken, Japan. The first time we met him, he was sleeping in a glass cage at pet shop. I thought he was very lovely and pretty. We brought him home to live with us and learned his disposition. He is gentle and quiet. He does not like walking so he is fat. He hates gathering dead leaves to his body when his fur drags the ground.

Last year my son and I came to Irvine for my husband's job. One year and five months before we came to Irvine, Yale got sick. Yale stayed at the hospital about one month. The dog doctor said to me,



“Yale does not go to America.” We did not give up. I believed that Yale would get well. After one month, Yale got well. Dog doctor said to me, “I cannot believe it. Yale improved.” I started the procedure for the visit to the United States.

First we went looking for an airplane company that would let us ride together. We were booking Delta. Then dog doctor put a microchip in Yale and gave him two injections for rabies.

A week before the trip I had to:

- I needed an export inspection document.
- Injection certificate of the rabies shot.
- Certificate of the vaccination.
- Registration of the microchip.

I faxed the documents of the examination of export to the quarantine station of Narita International Airport. On May 10, 2014, I went to the airport by Shinkansen and Narita express train to the hotel that was close to the airport. I arrived at the airport with

## In Our Own Words 2015

Yale five hours ahead of my flight because there is the quarantine inspection.

After the inspection, we finished the restroom of Yale and took him to the quarantine station in the airport and turned in Yale's documents. Then go to the check-in counter. I confirmed the reservation for the carry-on for my pet then our check-in was finished. While after taking Yale to the restroom once again, we relaxed in a lounge praying that our trip to the United States would be safe.

Yale did not move and never barked in the cage. I was not able to sleep at all on the plane. No one knew Yale was with us. We came into LAX and the passport control passed safely. Yale went to the restroom and we took the limousine home. Then I hastily gave Yale some water. I think Yale was not able to move very much for uneasiness. Yale was uneasy because he is an older dog and it was a long trip. My family thinks that it was good to come the United States with Yale.

We have been here one year. Yale is completely used to the United States and loves window-shopping now.



## My Tutor

*Afkhani Karimi*

I want to tell a little bit about my tutor.

My tutor's name is Sharon. She is very nice and kind with me. She is very helpful and caring. She is always working very hard with me. Sharon, all the time, brings good books to me with CDs. She doesn't give up on me!!! She recently brought a book that is very nice and has good advice. This book is named, "The Most Important Lessons in Life". This book teaches me a lot of good things.



# This is My Story

*Avishai Tzur*

My name is Avishai Tzur. I was born in 10/27/1959 in Israel. I have 3 kids, my eldest daughter live in Ohio and my other 2 kids live in Israel.



I moved to California in 2010 after I met my wife Maxine on the internet.

When I got here I did not know how to read, write or talk in English. With my wife and I used to communicate with a translator.

About 2 years ago I started to learn the English language in the public library with the help of my good teacher. He voluntarily and with a lot of patience teaches me to read, write, and talk English. He also teach me how to work with the computer.

With his help he helped me and still helps me to get my citizenship.

There are not enough words to describe my appreciation for my teacher and to the public library for all the help they gave me and still giving me.

May God bless you all and bless America. Amen.



## Madam C.E.O., Get Me a Coffee From the NY Times

*Camilla Chelini*

The women's work position around the world is sad. Women help more but benefit less from it.



The common stereotypes are that men are ambitious and results-oriented versus women that are more nurturing and communal. In the general thoughts, we have the idea that women should be helpful instead, men are busy.

## In Our Own Words 2015

A New York University study evaluated the performance of male and female employee. The results was that a man that give identical help is more likely to be recommended for promotions and important projects than a women.

Men are more selfish. Women are more mind-set to take care of others and to do the majority of “office homework” but this type of help doesn’t “pay off”. Instead, women lose opportunity and miss killer points. Tough men help with visible behaviors while women help more privately. The women’s help kind of disappears if there are more sacrifices for others. But, in a recent event the person who took notes for the entire time was surprisingly a man: Richard Branson, the founder of the Virgin Group.

We can benefit from encouraging people to help each other, doesn’t matter what gender they are!!!

Hopefully the work world is starting to get some direction in this way.



## My Grateful Things

*Grace Wang*

I'm so grateful for living in Irvine, my lovely parents, who sadly passed away 15 years ago, and my gorgeous husband of 26 years. I am more than happy to reflect my past year since I don't think I can express enough gratitude to those around me that have supported and continued to love me unconditionally. The more I think to express my gratitude, the more I will appreciate what I have now. First of all, I'm thankful that I live in a place and time where I am free, safe, and comfortable. No Ebola epidemic, no hunger, no war. I thank God for protecting me and this beautiful land - Irvine.

Second, I'm thankful for my loving parents because of their support and guidance that has made my life simple but meaningful even though they had been gone for years. This special bond remains unchanged by time.

The last one is my gorgeous husband, inside and out. For the last 26 years, he has taken care of me, allowed me to boss him around

(80% of the time), and rarely complains about our busy weekend even for volunteering at NOVA. Now, let's not go crazy and think he's perfect, but I love every bit of him, good and bad, from his receding hairline to his Santa belly on his waistline.

This concludes my gratitude list for 2014. I know there are more things and people to be thankful. But in here, I thank you Marcia for giving me this opportunity to put in words all of my thoughts that I never have time to write.



## Belarus Weather

*Sviatlana Kandybovich*

Unfortunately the weather in Belarus is not as favorable as in California. There is a lot of rain in the Autumn and Summer in Belarus. Also during the wintertime it is very snowy. Usually snow covers the ground in November and stays until the end of March. Snow cover reaches 4 feet and more in the North. The snow and ice in rivers begin to melt in late March and this causes severe flooding every year. In the Polesie, an area of Western Belarus, water rises up to the roofs of homes and floods the whole village. This is a very extreme situation for the local population. Accordingly this is also the time for spring holiday for school boys and girls. They have to stay at home until the end of the flooding.



This usually takes two or three weeks.

In the summertime as a rule June is a very rainy month. Sometimes the rains do not stop for several weeks. During this period mushrooms thrive throughout the forest and they are harvested for eating.

July and August can be dry. This is a difficult time for agriculture.

Although the weather predicts how the people of Belarus live, they love their country for its beauty and culture.

## In Our Own Words 2015

### Me

*Liang Hong*

My name is Liang Hong. I was born in Huaining, a small town in Eastern China, and grew up in Shuicheng, a city located in Western China. Later I moved back to the east and completed my undergraduate program (clinical medicine) at Hefei, the capital of Anhui province in Eastern China in June 2000. And then I worked as a resident physician in department of cardiology of a hospital for 4 years.

In 2004, I decided to do a pharmacological Ph.D. program and attended Zhongshan Medical School in Sun Yat-Sen University. This university was founded by Sun Yat-Sen and named after him, who was the first president and founding father of the Republic of China.

Guangzhou is the largest city in Southern China, it is very beautiful city as well as in its nickname “flower city”. And I luck out in the “flower city”, here I met with my flower, Jasmine, she is the most beautiful girl in my life. We fell in love and sooner married.

I graduated in July 2009. After a short visiting in National Institutes of Health in Eastern U.S., I moved to University of California at Irvine in Western U.S. in November 2010. It seemed that my life always traveled from Eastern area to Western area either in China or in America. And subsequently, Jasmine followed the way of “From East to West”, she moved to Irvine in 2011, from an Eastern country to a Western country.

We have lived in Irvine more than 4 years till now. In February 2012, our son, Lucian, was born. And 22 months later; he has his younger sister, Lillian. We like Irvine, a small and beautiful city, it is really a perfect place to work, study, and live.

I have a big moment each year in Irvine. For example, in 2010, I moved here; in 2011, Jasmine joined in; in 2012, we have our first baby; in 2013, the second baby was born; so what would happen in 2014? Yes, the answer is Newport Beach Library Literacy!

In last June, I was told by Jasmine that there were numerous wonderful programs in Newport Beach Library for who wants to

improve English. I attended them at once, and it turned out that Jasmine was right! I love the Literacy Programs! Here, not only made I friends from different counties, but I also learn diverse cultures all over the world. I enjoyed every program with our friends. I like book club, pronunciation program, vocabulary program, writing program, and especially movie talk.

The teacher in the vocabulary program is Bruce. He is very smart; his humor is impressive. Bruce made vocabulary so interesting, and we did not realize that the time was flying in the class. We like his class! However, unfortunately, Bruce suffered an illness now. When knowing this news, we all were sorrow for that. Hopefully he would recover very well, we love you.

Alesia is our teacher of writing program. Her teaching is very enlightening. Although the writing program only was 6 weeks, we benefited from it much more. The writing class showed us good ways how to improve writing, and introduced many useful learning resources on line, thank you, Alesia.

My favorite program is Movie Talk. I liked this program so much that I did not want to miss it any time. I thought this program help us not only to practice hearing, speaking, and writing; but to learn the life and culture of America. Among all movies we watched, to date, “We bought a Zoo” is my best love. Thanks Cherall for selecting and sharing these great movies!

I want to thank my teacher, Herb. He is so patient, professional, and warm-hearted. We have many topics in common. I learned many knowledge from him, for instance, what big moments were in American history, politics about how president or senator selection were processed, economy on how to do with stock, and travel on how to visit famous views all over the world, etc. I really enjoyed the time we talk. Thank you, Herb.

And other friends, workers, teachers, and tutors, I am sorry I could not include all names here, I want to express my great pleasure meeting you guys, and thanks for your helping and contributions. The time in Library Literacy is one of the happiest moments in my life, I love you all.

## In Our Own Words 2015

# My Napa Valley Vacation

*Kaori Okuhara*

Hello, my name is Tetsu, I am 13 years old Welsh Corgi. I live in a wonderful home with my mom, Kaori, and dad. Mom and I are very close, I always sit next to her at home, in Starbucks, and in the car. Mom talks to me everyday, I know many words such as “Hello” in English and Japanese. When I understand the meaning of words I react by opening my eyes widely and turning my head to the side. Also I like people watching, I know what behavior is good and what people will do next; for example, at dinner time dad opens the refrigerator to get a beer. When I hear the door opening, I run up to him and say cheer. Don’t be surprise that I drink a little bit beer. Later while they were eating dinner, they told me we would be taking to a trip Napa Valley by the car tomorrow. Awesome! I was so excited because I like taking drives and particularly when we are going on a new adventure.

In the morning at eight I jumped into the back seat, which was covered by bath towels. At first I thought mom wanted me to be more comfortable. However now I know the real reason, I shed. I settled down on the seat and was glad to see my water and favorite cookies close by. I was ready to start the seven hour trip.



I like looking out the window. I saw many tall buildings with shiny windows as we went through downtown Los Angeles. Later we went through deep green colored mountains. There was no building or houses, but there were many trees. My parents told me we would see almond trees and citrus trees. After that many cattle were eating grass and drinking water around range. While I was munching on cookies, I thought where do they sleep every night because I couldn’t find their house. Later I was ready to a take a nap. I was exhausted, when we finally we arrived at the hotel. I went to sleep.

Next morning, my parents said goodbye and left to explore Napa Valley. I was alone in the cozy room, but it was a good time for relaxing and watching TV on my bed. The rest helps my weak back legs. Two years ago I became a disabled dog because of Degenerative Myelopathy. DM is a progressive disease of the spinal cord in older dogs, especially Welsh Corgis. I used to walk every morning and night with mom. I liked chasing a football and kicking it with my nose. Since last summer I have not stood up myself, so mom prepared a sling to hold up my hip. At the same time she searched and compared many wheelchairs online every day. Two months later I got my cool personalized wheelchair for outside. First, I could not walk. I felt uncomfortable. I tried exercise over and over. Mom stayed patiently with me, my many dog friends and neighbors cheered for me. Finally, I can walk now. I go shopping in Fashion Island and the pet stores. I can meet many people who give me a big smile and pat me gently. I can chase the tennis ball on the hill. I'm so happy to come back to a fantastic social life.

When my parents returned, we played with the tennis ball in the backyard of the hotel. Mom told me I would be going with them in the morning to visit a winery. I was so excited because I have never been to a winery.

The next morning, we drove 10 minutes to visit the dog friendly winery. On the both sides of the narrow road, the huge vineyards spread. Where were the grapes? Dad told me we could not find grapes on the vines because they were out of season in March. The rustic town scenery made me relax. The car slowed down as we entered the entrance of the winery. It looked like a modern art center. The very tall metallic rabbit statue stood by the entrance. We parked the car at the parking lot, I sat in my wheelchair. I felt the soft winds and smell of sands from the vineyard. I walked toward to the main modern building and saw a cute staff waiting for me. She said welcome and gave me a big cookie. Wow! I like this winery. She showed us to the second floor balcony where the fence and the exterior of the building were clear glass. I could see through the inside tasting room form the balcony. My parents sat on the comfortable sofa and started wine tasting with other staff. All staff and other visitors were so friendly, I felt happy.

## In Our Own Words 2015

I really enjoyed Napa Valley vacation. It was a good time, refreshing and exciting. After a long drive, we arrived at home. I went to my bed. I fell in a deep sleep.



# Promotion Day

*Soni Choi*

June 18, 2015 was the 6th grade Promotion Day at Woodbury for my son, Hyunwoo. It was a wonderful day for our family. My son came to America in 5th grade, so he was struggling with his studies every day. Even though I knew that fact, I could not help him. However, he overcame the struggle and finally faced this wonderful day. So, I really want to applaud him.

Actually, I did not expect him to get any prize because he was not good at English. However, he got an athletic prize. It was so surprising to me and I was so happy too! Hyun is a very skinny boy, he does not look like an athletic person. That's why it was such a surprising thing!

In Korea, we call the ceremony not Promotion Day but Graduation Ceremony. It takes place in the winter season so we wore coats and take photos on a chilly day. After the ceremony, lots of people eat Chinese food (zazhang noodle) with families for celebrations. I do not know the reason why, but we love to go and eat Chinese food.

In America, we went to a Japanese restaurant to eat sushi instead of Chinese food. I think we made another new tradition here of eating Japanese food after a Promotion Ceremony.



# Moving to USA

*Mariana Ramos*

I am Accountant and worked in an international company in Brazil for 3 and half years. I used to audit public and not public companies but working abroad was something that always crossed my mind.

I was 25 years old and my focus was work and study hard to accomplish my financials goals. So, building a family was my second plans, therefore I could say I am workaholic.

How I met my husband and moved to US: My cousins were living in California and I came to visit them in May 2013. I could not imagine that I met my future husband in this trip.

The last weekend of my vacation I went to a Club in Los Angeles with my cousin. When I was least expecting it, I met my husband. From this day we talk each other every single day.

We had a relationship almost one and half years far from each other. During this period he went to Brazil six times and I came to US three times. Although meeting someone and getting married wasn't in my short plans, I felt that I could not lost someone that I love and make me feels happy.



Then I left everything behind to start a new life in US with my husband, and to start a new life in a different country with different culture and language and far from my family.

Lastly, I am here in USA. I got married and I am so happy with my married life, however I am learning English, trying overcome difficulties of the adaptation and seeking a job.

## In Our Own Words 2015

# Happy Halloween!

*Chie Zusho*

Halloween is just around the corner. I was thinking how to decorate in my house and outside of my house. I wanted to surprise them and I wanted to make them happy too. I know that my youngest son likes scary stuff and my oldest son likes candy and candles. So I went shopping to find some decorations. I bought some LED skull luminaries, big pumpkins, a big spider, a large bag of spider webs, a skull head and some treats. Of course I prepared carving kit for carving pumpkins. Also I got some stuff to make DIY Halloween decor such as an orange and black balloons and some crepe paper to hang them from the ceiling. First I don't want to spend a lot of money. Second I don't like having a lot of stuff in my house too. So DIY is a great way to save money. And I got some idea from Pinterest. When Halloween is approaching a week before, I set them up and I did it myself using crepe paper and balloons. And I took some Halloween decorations from the garage from last year. I did it when my kids were at school. It was fun to do it. "This is perfect. They must be surprised". I said excitedly. I was taking a video camera with my hand when they got home from school.



"Welcome back" I said. When they came in, first the boys gasp and then they said "Wow what is that, mom, did you do it?" I said "Yes! isn't it nice?" My youngest son said "Oh I like these"" pointing to the eyeball erasers behind the framed pictures. Oldest son patted hanging balloons from the ceiling with his hand and kicked balloons with his legs, he said "I like these hanging balloons, so cool." I said to my self "I'm so happy and they are awesome kids". We started carving. Oldest son was excited to do it but youngest son doesn't care so he started to watch TV. We made one scary face and the other one looked like an angry face. We left them outside and I placed some flameless candles between two pumpkins. After that I made roasted pumpkin seeds. We ate everything while we're watching kids TV channel. I took many pictures and video. It will be a great memory for the future when we get older. It was such lovely and wonderful day.

# Introduce Myself

*En T.*

My name is En. I am from Tokyo, Japan. There are many things about me that I would like to share with you. First, please let me tell you something about my hometown. Tokyo is the capital of Japan and the population is approximately 13 million. It is an international city and convenient to live. You can find 24 hours convenient stores everywhere and buses, subways always come in time. It is also a beautiful city to visit. You can enjoy the atmosphere of traditional downtown, venerable temples, Japanese garden, hot springs, delicious foods, etc.

When I was a child, I was living with my parents, grandfather and grandmother together. Since I am an only child, I always played with my cousins, sometimes with my aunts. My parents raised me tenderly. And I often went to shopping, park and travelling with my family on holidays. I got married last year and now I am in here with my husband.

I like traveling, cooking, baking, listening to music and cycling. But I like the most is traveling with my family. I can not only experience the different culture, but also share the beautiful scenery and exciting things with beloved family.

Have you ever been to Japan? When I was in Japan, I traveled Japan with my family from North to South, from Hokkaido to Okinawa. Hokkaido is located in the farthest north in Japan. It is very cold and heavy snowfalls in winter. It is famous for hot springs, magnificent natural and delicious foods. I like Hokkaido in summer, because there will be many beautiful and lovely flower fields there. Especially lavender, I can't forget the aroma even now. Okinawa Island is Japan's southernmost prefecture. As all the islands are in a subtropical zone, you can enjoy a deep blue sky, emerald green seas, and beautiful coral reefs.

This year, I traveled with my husband in the US. We went to Las Vegas, Sedona, Grand Canyon and Zion national park. Las Vegas is the most interesting city I have ever traveled. Because it looks like a theme park — “a small world”. There are “New York”, “Paris”,

## In Our Own Words 2015

“Venice”, “Egypt”, many symbolic buildings concentrated there. From 5 star resort hotels, amazing shows, games to restaurants, we can find everything you need in this city which is in the middle of the desert. Differ from Las Vegas, the nature of Sedona, Grand Canyon and Zion Park are not just magnificent but intensely beautiful. We can feel deeply emotion and astonishment.

Sharing my interests with you has been fun and I hope you enjoyed reading about me.



### Some Interests

*Akane Izutsu*

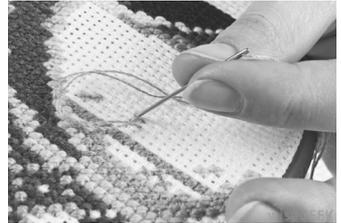
When it is fun for you, what kind of time is it?

I get absorbed in cross-stitching.

First of all, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Akane Izutsu. I come from Japan. I have been living here for one and half year.

I came here and three months later I made a friend. She tells me about cross-stitching. We do cross-stitching together and think about a new design.

The time to spend with a friend while doing cross-stitching is very happy.

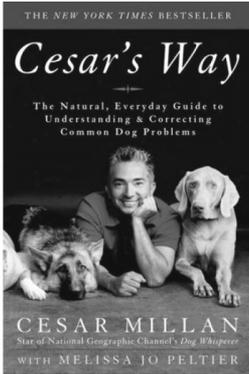


### Understanding Dog Behavior

*Maja Kuta*

I read Cesar Millan's book, “The Natural, Everyday Guide to Understanding and Correcting Common Dog Problems”. It is a wonderful book, written in an accessible, friendly language. I think the book can be interesting even to those not directly interested in dogs as a topic.

It is amazing that in the era of space travels and such advanced technology – the vast majority of us still make mistakes in understanding something as simple and old as dog behavior. Dogs have accompanied us for thousands of years.



After reading the book, I think it is very important that correctly reading canine behavior becomes common knowledge. I believe that the drawing global attention to this issue is very important. It's not just about the obedience of dogs, but the dog's entire mental health. This can eliminate stress for both human and dog happiness.

I will use my artistic abilities to spread this knowledge as much as I can.



## Who Am I?

*Carolina Henriquez-Sanguinetti*

I am so numb after your departure  
that I am not me anymore,  
I hear but I do not have feelings,  
it is like my feelings were taken away from me.

My life is not my life any longer,  
my feelings are not mine any longer,  
I do not know who I am now....  
Like a vessel without an engine  
floating without a purpose and a compass.

I do not know where I am going...  
The roots, I thought I had, are exposed to the elements

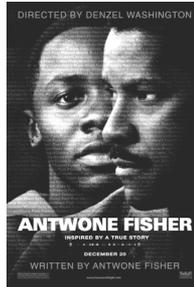
I wonder, where I will land....

## In Our Own Words 2015

*Each month, learners have the opportunity to participate in Movie Talk. This provides a comfortable environment to watch a film and to ask questions and discuss the content. After each film, the learners are asked to write a review about the movie. Following are a collection of reviews from selected films. Enjoy!*



### Antwone Fisher



“Antwone Fisher” is an inspiring movie which has a great message for everyone. I think the most powerful message of the movie is “not losing hope” even in the worst situations.

This movie is about a young man in navy who needed to have therapy sessions with a psychiatrist who helped him find the sources of his anger and sadness from his childhood and also forced him to deal with his problems. He tried to find hope in his life and he motivated by the help of the psychiatrist and his new girlfriend. He was desperate and full of anger but at last he moved on by believing in himself. He was alone all his life without the warm circle of family and friends. At the end he found himself between his real family, his love of life and the father and son relationship with his psychiatrist.

I’ve been touched by this movie. It is an incredible movie with outstanding performances. The movie is very emotional and has great positive views. The best thing is that it’s based on a true story. It shows how someone who had a terrible and aggressive childhood turned to a great and successful person with a magnificent character. He fought for his life to beat his loneliness

and his bad temper and with all of that he became a new young man.

This movie made me think more about life, people and whole world. Everyone must see this movie.

*Eila Emani*



The history of Antwone makes me remember how thankfully I am because God permitted that I had a good childhood and nice family.

Even though I have never met someone who had this kind of problems, but I know that these things there are happening in the whole world all the time, adults distract kids and abuse these kids or even of their own children.

This kind of problem occurs mainly in poor countries. So these children grow up with psychiatric problems and sometimes they become bad adults with bad behaviors, causing harm to society, this movie shows for us how important is our childhood and from which we lived and we learned will form us in the future.

By the way, I could learn to listen the people who want to help me, mainly when bad things are happening with me constantly and the problems is within my mind, my behavior and I need to stop and thinking about things that are surround me.

Sometimes I think is easier just be mad or fight with someone instead to stop and find out where and what is the real problem, stay calm make us more quality of life and make us understand different kinds of people and being at one with your surroundings.

It will make me happier and more positive and it can even improve my health, just thinking about how solve the problems instead increase the conflicts and problems.

*Mariana Ramos*

## In Our Own Words 2015

# The Fault in Our Stars



I really enjoyed the movie "The Fault in Our Stars". I think that the movie is informative, psychologically difficult and it makes us reflect about life and relationship. Especially, I want to commend the work of the actors. The pain and emotions felt by the characters felt so real, as if I was feeling the same. The whole movie I was worried about Gus and Hazel and really would have liked to see a miracle for them. At the end of the movie our class was silent. I realized, that all of us thought about his personal life and asked ourselves same questions. That's why we probably were not ready to continue our conversation about the movie. Perhaps, on that day each of us has changed for better.

*Lima Alexandrova*



I have not watched American movie for a while. Even though I love movies, I was not willing. I did not know why. I watched "Fault in Our Stars" then I realized why I did not feel like to watch American movies. In the USA, watching American movies was considered as one method of studying English. It prevents me from appreciating the beauty of movies. I wanted to enjoy the movie itself, not thinking about improving my English. However, I enjoyed "Fault in Our Stars" a lot.

This movie is about two teenagers, Hazel and Augustus who love each other very deeply. Since they both are very sick, they can understand each other and make each other laugh. They share their

concerns and fear of dying. Especially when Hazel is worried about their parents, I could feel for her a lot. As a mother of two sons, if I were in her shoes, I will probably only think about the future of my sons without me. At the beginning of the movie, I felt sorry for Hazel and Augustus because they have cancer and they do not have ordinary teenager life. In the middle, I thought that this movie is really sad because they started to enjoy their lives but soon or later they are dying from cancer. However, I became so happy that they all found the answers to their own questions. This is a happy ending. It is a very touching happy ending. And I love it!

*Yuin Jung*



## In America



“In America” was a wonderful movie that cause me to think a lot about hope and faith. There were four people in the family (mother, father, and two daughter). They got in trouble when they were passing the US boarder illegally to find a new life. Elder daughter asked a favor of her dead brother so we figured out they lost him and maybe they want to run away of painful memories. The elder daughter was so wise and independent. A youngest was truly pure happiness and hope.

They hadn't have enough money so they settled down in a very dangerous and cheap area in old crowded building for a poor people in New York where were many immigrants came from different countries. They decorated their house with hope and second hand stuffs. The parents couldn't find a job in their level so the mother became waitress and the father became taxi driver. The parents had a

## In Our Own Words 2015

lot of pain in their hearts about loss but they always be calm and had fun with their daughters.

There are a strange apartment in the lower floor with a big sign in a door: GO away. A strange, horrible man lived there. He didn't like to connect with anybody and sometime screamed badly. In Halloween, when anybody didn't answer their knocking, the two girls knocked the strange neighbor door. The sweet younger girl insisted knocking because she always drives herself with hope and happiness. Afterwards the man opened the door and encountered two angel faces. They started to be good friends. The man had HIV and he was going to die.

Meanwhile the mother got pregnant but there was problem. If she decided to keep the baby, it would be a dangerous for both of them. She was a religious person and decided to keep the baby with all the risks. They enjoyed the life with hope, pain, and happiness. Except for the father, rest of family, even the neighbor, had faith in their heart and prayed.

He had hope for his son, he prayed when his son was in coma, but he lost him, he lost his hope, he lost his faith. He preferred to have icy heart instead of having hope. He suffered inside and had a big smile in his face.

The baby was getting big and bigger and the neighbor was getting weak and weaker. Both of them hospitalized, one of them for birthing a life and the other for losing a life. Meanwhile the father struggled with anxiety of lacking money for hospital, for his wife, for his children that maybe lose their mother and for his friend that struggling with death. He was really scared. Finally the mother gave birth but the baby have problems. The elder daughter gave her blood to keep her sister. She wanted to do every thing to keep the baby because she believe this is a last opportunity to bring back hope in her father's heart.

The baby stayed alive but the neighbor died. He was rich so he paid hospital bill for family before he died. The family came back home, they already had passed the pain and started new life with hope.

Although I really enjoyed to watch the movie, life is life and it's so different.

*Mojgan Bardeh*

I watched this movie — “In America” — at Newport Beach library. Frankly speaking, I watched the movie for the first time after I gave a birth. So I was concentrate during movie time, and I was touched about the story of movie, and I thought the acting of the two girls, Christy and Ariel, was great.

The movie described family love. They lost youngest son, Frankie, by accident, suddenly. However they all tried to overcome the tragedy, even two girls, too.

If we have terrible accidents, for example, we lost family members by accident, can we love each other after that? Most of case, we would blame each other, very much, all of moment, for a long time. Finally, the family relationship would be broken.

For my family case, when we got traffic ticket, my husband and I blamed each other. When my son got hurt, my husband sometimes blame me and I tried to make an excuse.

Nevertheless, Sarah and Johnny cared for each other, they did their best to have a responsibility as a parents and as a husband and a wife.

Finally Sarah was pregnant. It was definitely happy, but they fighted, because they couldn't express their feeling. Unfortunately, the baby and she was serious condition. So, they were hospitalized for a while. Sadly, they have no money, but their friend, Mateo, treated for them.

Sarah gave a birth to a new born baby, and Mateo died from AIDS.

I think that two girls noticed Mateo's death. But they believed that he was still alive in the moon like as ET. In last scene, Christy asked her father to let Frankie go in our mind and our memory, because she wanted to lead happy new life with her family and new baby. Most of all, she thought that Frankie hope so. Christy was really mature. She is better than any other adult.

Is it easy to forget somebody, especially family member?

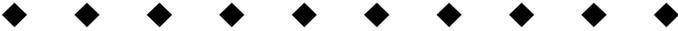
## In Our Own Words 2015

I think it is really hard. However, we should forget, left family members should lead their normal life. And then, the person who die would be happy.

I want to recommend to my friends who have a family trouble. I'm sure that they would be better after they watch this movie.

Anyway, I appreciate Newport Beach Literacy Service.

*Il Jeong Choi*



## Marley & Me



We just discussed “our first pet” at our vocabulary class and I was thinking of getting a puppy for my children when we are ready, then I watched this movie. I loved it from the beginning, because it is a story about a puppy, though not an obedient one. It also has Jennifer Aniston (my husband and I are fans of “Friends”). I was more and more attracted by the movie as I watched it. This is not a movie but our real lives. The scenes when the couple got married, when Jenny was pregnant, when she was struggling between her children and her career were exactly the same experiences in the development of my family. It reminds me so much of our past: our dreams and lives when we have not had children, the busyness when we had our first one, then second one. My husband reacted same as John when I was pregnant with my second one, and we had the same conversation: “no more child!” after our daughter was

born. Maybe my husband was also staying in the car and hesitating to go inside.

Jenny quitted her career, and John was not as successful as his friend in career, but what they gain is more than that: three beautiful children, a dog still full of energy, a great and sweet family. This is a great family movie, which is about being a wife, a husband and parents, about sacrifice, compromise in raising our children. What impressed and moved me most is no matter how rambunctious Marley was, how many troubles did he make, the couple had never thought of sending him back. Just like our children, no matter what they do, how they are, we still love them.

John was a good columnist but he wanted to be a reporter, while after he became a reporter, he found he missed the time being a columnist. Just like Jenny told him: we always want something that we don't have. Yes, we do this all the time. We all need to learn spending more time in treasuring things we have than pursuing things we don't have. But I am thinking that how could we know if we don't try!

“A dog doesn't care who you are, if you're rich or poor, if you're tall or short. He's always there for you.” How true it is and it makes me love dogs more than ever.

*Jasmine Liu*



“Marley and Me” did not just talk about a dog, but about life. If I can learn something from this movie; it is that life is not what you long for or wishes, but is what you must face and live with.

At the beginning of the movie, Jenny had a life plan, she scheduled what she would do and achieve in each step. She seemed to arrange her life with a perfect fortune ahead of time. However, John, actually, Marley, broke her plans. Marley always made mess everywhere; it might be okay when there were two people in the family, but when babies were born, Marley turned out to be a jerk for Jenny. Jenny could not bear with Marley, she was exhausted.

## In Our Own Words 2015

However, it was Marley accompanying with her when she was depressed or in bad mood, and Marley also accompanied with children and brought them happiness when they grew up. This made Marley be a member or a part of life in the family.

About John, I really appreciate his characters; he has very good temper, he is optimistic, and he has the ability of changing himself, which was difficult for other people like me, and finally he could surprise himself. I think that most people have to change themselves to meet with life, because life is not what you hope, but what you have to live with.

*Liang Hong*



## This Means War



The movie was about two detectives who were best friends as well, one of them a lady man and the other one a British and more down to earth than the other one, they worked on secret missions until they did something wrong and they put them in bench.

They started to date the same girl without knowing the true fact, they both realized the girl was the same one until they talked about their dates and looked the same picture of her.

Everything turned like a challenge to decide who's gonna keep her, on the other hand she was doing the same thing, trying to forget her ex she decided to date both of them, try them to finally decide who is the right one.

At one point of the movie the three of them met in a restaurant and that's where she figured out they knew each other. After that she was kidnaped by a terrorist and the officers, both of them rescued her.

She finally decided to stay with the American guy who was actually the one who didn't want a serious relationship at the very first time.

*John David Chung*



THIS MEANS WAR is an American romantic comedy.

In fact, it is a simple love triangle. This American version of it, places the plot in the hands of two good friends CIA agents. The characters FDR and Tuck used all their CIA resources to help themselves to impress a girl, Lauren. The war between them started when they realized they were dating the same girl.

The characters, FDR, a womanizer presented himself as a ship captain, and Tuck, a divorcee, presented himself as a travel agent. This silly war between them is framed in a bigger violent plot with an international criminal organization to give a twist to the movie of a violent drama.

*Carolina Henriquez-Sanguinetti*

## In Our Own Words 2015

# We Bought a Zoo



Benjamin is a man that has lost his wife.

Beside him two children, the son in a really hard and black time for the lost of the mother as well as because of the age.

The little girl full of exiting energy.

Benjamin decide to give a big change to his family's life for fight the pain.

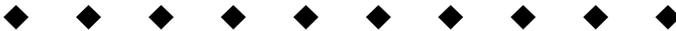
And “why not?” the great change is: he bought a new house with a zoo in the back yard!

So the opposite connotation to death: the life, the challenge of trying to live the life against the trial of a death.

The engine for Benjamin is the love for his kids and the force to bring forward what he loved “why not?”.

Successfully Benjamin has brought happiness and changes in his family with the perfume of his wife and children's mother.

*Camilla Chelini*



The movie theme was Drama and it was about a family (included father, son — elder child — and daughter) mother of family died in the beginning of movie. Each of them struggled with big lost in different situation. Benjamin (father) had lost his wife, his love and everything around him remembered his memorial of love. He wasn't able to tolerate that any more. The son who was in teen age lost his Mom whom always was his friend and supporter and on the other hand he had problem with his father and his school too. Finally the nice little girl that lost her Mom in childhood .

It was very hard situation and Benjamin wanted to just run away so he quitted his job, and decided to change his home and his living area. Accidently he bought a bankrupt zoo. He thought this adventure maybe help him to not think about his loss. So they moved to zoo but his son didn't agree, he didn't want to lose his friends or his home. They work hard with the rest of zoo's staff and finally they were able to overcome problems and convert a bankrupt zoo to a popular zoo.

I really like the movie because it wanted to show us, certainly sadness and loss happen in our way. We can stay in that situation and sorrow in the rest of our life or we can accept that in our heart and keep open all doors and move to new situation. A new situation could be about the gifts that life gives us again and again.

*Mojgan Bardeh*





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