



## Wisdom of the EIA Chairs

Since the year 2000, eight members have chaired the English in Action program: Chula Morel-Seytoux, Dee Gustavson, John Heron, Joyce Garbutt, Marianne Dieckmann & Mary Lyn Moseley, Marsha Alper & Carole Hessler. While the tools that they use to match volunteers with their international partners have changed dramatically from two cardboard, index boxes filled with 5 x 8 cards to a computer database, the personal techniques haven't changed at all. It still takes many phone calls to get the right match. The number of matches per year has increased somewhat in recent years, but generally it has been upwards of 200 per year. Serving as EIA chair is a job with some wonderful rewards and some serious challenges—the most serious of which has been to recruit new volunteers. Every EIA chair has commented that they would love to have volunteers take new partners every year, but volunteers and internationals enjoy each other so much that they don't want the partnership broken up. Some volunteers understand this problem and will adjust their schedule to take on an additional partner. The reward is getting to know people from many different countries. After a while you feel like you could be an ambassador to the U.N. We don't know why people are not beating down our doors asking to be matched. The opportunity is enriching, and yet some international graduate students and spouses have requested an EIA partner in the fall and have gone home at the end of the year without ever being matched. We interviewed the people who have done the matching since 1999. They have much to share. We asked them what advice they would give to new volunteers.

As you might expect new volunteers have a variety of questions such as the time commitment, how fluent in English are the students, do you constantly correct grammar,

is it tutorial like a class, is it just talk; some people like to walk and talk. All the chairs had similar replies. It is one hour per week for one year, but many partnerships turn into friendships which last longer. Several chairs thought that students were coming to the U.S. with greater fluency than in the past. The program is flexible and adaptable to the interests of both partners. Some people like to visit grocery stores, discuss movies, talk about family. In fact, a surprise to some volunteers is how similar are the human concerns of people in different countries. High on everyone's list are our children, our parents, our spouse, our career.

The chairs were strongly in agreement about the qualities needed in a good EIA volunteer: be a good listener, be tolerant of other countries and cultures, be curious, interested, and be dependable. Early on establish a routine for letting the other know if a meeting must be missed. We all take trips, have dentist appointments, and students have professors who have demands. Being punctual is a desirable quality in most cultures, but not everyone is. Set up a procedure for letting the other know if you are going to be late. Are you going to call, text message, what? Being a good conversationalist can mean bringing up topics for conversation rather than telling one story after another.

The first meeting is important. It should be in a public place. The I-Center is ideal. Avoid places where someone is going to have to pay like a coffee shop. Be open. It may be the only time in the day when someone will listen to what you want to say about yourself. Make yourself real. Tell about your family, your education, your job. The favorite American topic: where you are from. Family is an easy topic for internationals, and learning about American culture is usually of great interest. If it is

important to you, you can identify your political and religious persuasions, but do so in a way that is not proselytizing or argumentative. That is the one rule that all the chairs thought important. Ask your partner about their life. What do they hope to accomplish at Stanford. And what do they want from the EIA experience. Their name, what do they want to be called? If their name is hard for Americans to pronounce, ask them patiently to help you. You want it right.

The chairs thought that people play many roles as EIA volunteers. When our partner is going to travel to southern California, the national parks, even San Francisco we became tourist guides. We help people with English both verbally and sometimes in proofing papers. One chair was insistent that we should be gentle when making corrections. We may become surrogate family. More than one woman has coached an EIA partner through pregnancy. We are the safe, easy connection to the American culture and community. So be a friend. If you like to bake, cook together. Hike, drink coffee, or just talk. Just remember that many EIA partners will think of you as their personal interpreter of American customs. If a con-

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### It's a Potluck/Music Night

Bring food, eat, meet friends, and enjoy music

**Sunday,  
February 15,  
6:00 P.M.**

*If you've been around CCIS for awhile you have no doubt run into Mary Bulf. She is a sweetheart who takes on any task that needs doing. When we had the Reception Desk in the I-Center she was a regular. Mary can always be counted on for support, for Mary is a person who takes her membership in CCIS seriously. She has had many ELA partners, and can often be found at Potlucks, the Holiday luncheon, and the Annual meeting. At this year's Holiday luncheon she gave Carolyn Gannon a copy of the story she had written in 1999 about an encounter at the Reception Desk. It is a very human story about a Japanese family who had a serious medical problem that required the spouse to return to Japan for surgery.*

## Brown or Blue

by Mary Bulf

**Y**ou never knew what your day would be like when you were the receptionist in the lobby of the Bechtel International Center. Someone would come in looking for an EIA partner, or perhaps they wanted to find someone to proofread a paper; they might even want some help interpreting the options listed on the back of a traffic ticket.

It is always with a feeling of anticipation that I approached the reception desk at the Bechtel international center at Stanford for my once a month volunteer assignment. So many interesting people visit the I-Center from all over the world and I've had such a variety of experiences that it is never boring during my four hours on duty for the Community Committee for International Students (CCIS). Early in the fall a few years ago I was sitting at the desk when a young Japanese woman came in with her little son. She was slender and there seem to be an air of tense restraint about her. Her son was very quiet and leaned up against his mother as she put her arm around him. She asked if she could use a phone on my desk as she had to make an urgent call to her doctor. Ignoring regulations that said no non-CCIS calls I listened while she phoned and was very glad I had said yes. It turned out that she had cancer of the eye and would need an operation to have that removed—a very urgent situation. Together we were able to make the calls to arrange for her husband to take their son and for her to get to her doctor. She left

and in the days that followed I kept wondering how things had worked out for her. Soon afterwards I received a phone call from a volunteer for the English in Action program. Sometimes volunteers ask for advice with difficult problems, and she was concerned that her partner, a young Japanese man was lonely and really depressed. My husband, Gene, and I had shown slides of our three week trip to Japan and our stay in Japanese homes. She thought my husband might be able to help cheer him up. When she told me that his wife had returned to Japan for an operation and had taken their young son with her. I asked if it was for an eye operation. It was and of course I agreed to see her partner. Upon calling the young man I found out that he likes the out-of-doors so we arranged to meet him that weekend for a hike at Foothill Park in the hills behind Palo Alto. As we hiked up the road through Wildhorse Valley he was interested even in his depressed condition and enjoyed the general setting and the different plants. He kept commenting how much his wife and son would've enjoyed it also. When my husband

showed him how to hold a foxtail between his hands and gently slide one hand against the other causing the foxtail to move up the arm under a sleeve or to eject at the ends of the fingers he almost broke down thinking how delighted his son would be to learn such a trick. We told him to let us know when they returned and we would bring all three of them. A few weeks later I received a letter from his wife in Japan thanking me for helping her make the first arrangements and also for taking her husband on the hike which he had described to her. She was looking forward to joining us when she returned. With such an ordeal to face it was a surprise to find that her letters still made us laugh when she said that she had been wondering whether to get a brown false eye or maybe try a blue one! Fortunately surgery went well and she did eventually rejoin her husband at Stanford. The five of us retraced the steps of the earlier hike and the father had the joy of sharing his pleasure with his wife and of delighting his son by showing him the foxtail trick. My husband and I added another family to our album of international friends.

## Lori Reeser, English Class Teacher

By MaryAnn Saunders

**W**hen you think of our short story teacher, Lori Reeser, think about 3 L's- besides the obvious L in her first name- Law, Literature and Laughter.

Her life story is pretty much what one would expect of someone who is a teacher, that is, she loves going to school. She received a BA in Physical Anthropology from Berkeley and soon afterwards, an MS in Anatomy from Stonybrook College in New York. Her plan was to do research in physical anthropology, go on for a Ph.D. and become an academician. Life threw Lori a curve ball, however. Instead of fulfilling

her plans, she returned to the Bay Area and attended Hastings Law School in San Francisco. After graduating, she worked for several large accounting firms in their tax departments. At the same time, Lori trained with a non-profit group called CITY GUIDES and began to lead tours around San Francisco. She enjoyed the intensity of interaction and the delight of the visitors at experiencing beautiful and historic San Francisco. After about five years of that, Lori returned to Sunnyvale where she grew up and pursued her ESL teaching credential through UC Santa Cruz Extension. Then,

to our advantage, Lori began teaching at Bechtel and as they say, the rest is history. Lori has taught several classes over the years: The Bay Area and Beyond (this class taught students how to research California travel and then present their findings in class), Live Like a Local ( this class covered various local sites to visit ), Sandwiches: Ingredients, Construction & Ordering (this class familiarized the students with the various ingredients in typical American sandwiches and included a field trip to a restaurant so students could apply their knowledge) and

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## Fifty Spouses To Benefit from 2014 Spouse Education Fund Grants

By Gwyn Dukes



On December 6, 2014, thanks to the generosity of CCIS donors to the Spouse Education Fund (SEF), fifty spouses from nineteen countries received grants to pursue their professional or personal interest while here. The I-Center Assembly Room was filled with grateful and excited couples and families, happy to celebrate this opportunity for a spouse to broaden her/his experience here. Many at the reception went out of their way to tell the SEF Committee how thrilled they were and what a difference this will make in their lives! All of the grantees had submitted an application in November with details of their background and had specified the course or program they wished to follow. And each had a personal interview with the SEF Committee, explaining their choice and how it fit into their plans for the future.

Who are these grantees? They are the spouses (four husbands, forty six wives) of international students, post-docs and visiting scholars who have put their own careers or education “on hold” in order to accompany their partner to Stanford. The SEF grants encourage them to take steps to pursue their own goals, and provide modest grants for this purpose. Funding comes from the donors to the CCIS SEF Current Giving and SEF Endowment Funds, and from generous donations in memory of former leaders and friends of CCIS. This year’s grants included awards in the names of Betty Ogawa (4), Jane Reber (4), Ginny Spears (3), Josh Alper (2) and Marianne Dieckmann (5).

For the named grants, the SEF Committee

selects grantees whose interests and passions reflect those of the person whose name is being honored. For example, Jane Reber’s children were gratified that her devotion to English in Action will continue through the awards in her name, and that the Jane Reber grantees share her fascination with photography, languages and communication. Family members of four of the five honorees attended the reception to share memories, reflect on what CCIS meant to their relative, and present the named awards.

Two thirds of the grantees (33) requested courses offered by the Stanford Continuing Studies Program in a variety of disciplines: business, communication, computer science, philosophy, design, biology, political science and writing. This year the Stanford Continuing Studies program provided tuition waivers for fourteen grantees, and the SEF assisted nineteen others with partial grants towards their tuition. Feedback from past grantees highlights their excitement at experiencing Stanford as a student themselves—rather than through the eyes of their partner.

They are fascinated to see the American-style of interactive instruction—often a contrast with their university back home and many form new and lasting friendships with fellow classmates from the local community who share their interests.

Fifteen grantees will attend other local institutions such as Foothill (3), DeAnza, UC-Berkeley and UC-Santa Cruz Extension,

City College of San Francisco, Santa Clara University Business School, Huit International Business School (SF), the University of Cincinnati (doctoral research in voice to be done here), and the Palo Alto Art Center. In addition, an Italian grantee will take online classes in teaching Italian from a language school in Italy and a Chinese computer scientist will use her grant to attend an important conference in her field.

This year’s grantees come from nineteen countries, including five each from France, Germany and South Korea and China, four each from India, Japan, and Mexico, three each from Brazil, Poland and Taiwan, two each from Iran, Israel, and Spain, and one each from Canada, Chile, Italy, Sweden,

**Interested members can sponsor a named grant to honor a friend or mark a special occasion with a donation of \$250 and above to the CCIS Spouse Education Fund.**

Switzerland, and Turkey. Among these, two had dual nationality. The value of the thirty-six grants from CCIS-SEF funds was \$11,074, and the value of the fourteen tuition waivers from Stanford Continuing Studies was \$5495, for a total of \$16,569 for all fifty grants. The SEF Committee and all the grantees wish to express their deep gratitude to all the CCIS members and donors for their great generosity in making these opportunities possible!



## President's column Karen McNay

The close of 2014 and dawn of 2015 is a very busy and exciting time for all of us at CCIS and Bechtel.

For those 75 hearty souls who braved the worst/best rainstorm of the year (so far) we enjoyed a lovely Holiday Luncheon at Michaels at Shoreline on December 11th. Longtime Bay Area artist and CCIS member Geri McGilverly entertained us with her humor, guitar and a medley of festive songs.

Bob Spears, Carolyn Gannon and I spent a couple of weeks cleaning out and painting the Loan Closet in the basement of the Abrams Mid-Rise Building. This was a long overdue, but necessary, project and we now have lots of clean space to restock the shelves. So if you are planning Spring cleaning, or have friends who are, the Loan Closet would welcome your clean and gently used items. The items we have most need for are: silverware, dishes, drinking glasses, pots and pans, irons, rice cookers, small appliances, twin XL and queen size sheets and blankets. Please contact Bob Spears (in the Program Chairs list) for more information or for help delivering your items. While we were in the painting mood we also cleaned and painted the CCIS office at Bechtel.

The Spouse Education Fund awarded fifty grants in a wide variety of fields to very deserving spouses. We were so pleased that a family representative was able to attend and present the awards to most of the Named Grants.

A couple of dates for you to look forward to: The next Potluck Music Night is February 15th from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. so bring your family and/or students to enjoy and a dish to share. We look forward to seeing you there. Also, our Annual Meeting, being held at Bechtel International Center, is on May 11th from 4 to 6:00. I hope you can join us.

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troversial subject comes up you can identify the issues and the advocates, and if you want to you can identify your own views without expecting your partner to agree.

Gifts and paying for refreshments are sensitive subjects. Dutch treat is perhaps the best way, but reciprocity may be difficult. If what you are providing were done in another context, remuneration could be expected and expensive, and internationals know that. EIA, however, is an American custom of volunteering. This is a good topic for conversation. Different cultures have different rules regarding this. Internationals may bring a small gift when they return from a trip, and a gift of something from their culture when they leave Stanford is not unknown. What most chairs cautioned against is setting up a pattern whereby the international always pays for coffee, etc. We don't expect gratuities and don't accept pay.

Planning for meetings comes naturally from the kind of activities you and your partner enjoy. It is always good to ask what

they have been doing since the last meeting and if they have any questions. If you are interested in slang and vocabulary, you can encourage them to write down the words they hear that don't make sense. Stuff like: *anything goes, but he'll take it personally, or she needs a cause or we'll go with that.*

Some new volunteers want to know how EIA is different from Homestay and Hospitality. The easiest answer is that EIA requires a year commitment to a weekly meeting. Longevity and frequency can build trust, and thus EIA may encourage a deeper discussion. But the Homestay and Hospitality folks love the program. Many do it year after year. Given the difference in time, it really depends on how much time you can give. Is it weekly, a few days in your home, or an occasional social get together?

The best advice of all came in a variety of words saying essentially the same thing: be completely yourself. Enjoy. Have fun; make friends. Friendly and outgoing, explaining  
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[www.ccisStanfordU.org](http://www.ccisStanfordU.org)

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Send email to Magdalena Bull  
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or visit the Resource Center for International Families

## **Director's column John Pearson**

*John's column was not available at the time this issue went to the printer. Look for his article in the Spring.*



A good way to find out what is taking place at the I-Center is to go to <http://icenter.stanford.edu/events/calendar.html>. It isn't easy to find on the I-Center's website, but this link will take you directly to a colorful calendar in which attractive icons help you to identify the activity you are looking for. Select the month at the top of the window.

The month of February begins with the 7 A.M. large screen broadcast of the Africa Cup of Nations which includes most African nations. The football, or soccer, tournament began on January 17 and will continue to February 8. The I-Center also offers a live broadcast of international athletic competitions including Cricket, World Cup Football, and the Olympics. You are welcome and can join your international friends cheering their favorite team. You can imagine what that is like as Stanford's internationals come together in one room. When the World Cup was held in South Africa, the I-Center staff advised the nearby dorms that they could expect loud cheering at 3:00 in the morning.

Many classes are taught by the spouses of our international students and scholars. Some are open, and you can check with the teacher to see if there is room. Should you wish to perfect that pronunciation of Chinese, Esperanto, Italian, Spanish, or Turkish you can do no better than with a native speaker. Besides language there are dancing, cooking, and craft classes.

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without lecture. And the most cogent: shut up and listen. Remember the hour is about the student. Listen to yourself as well as to your partner. If you are doing 60 percent or more of the talking...well, EIA attracts talkers, doesn't it?

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finally, her current class: Introduction to the American Short Story.

Lori is an avid reader. She enjoys literary books, (like Dickens and Austen), history books (especially covering the time of the Roman Empire to the creation of Europe), mysteries, science-fiction, non-fiction, etc. She is even a member of an online book club where she enjoys the interaction of others who share her interests. Lori's philosophy of

teaching includes lots of repetition since she knows that students must interact with words several times before they retain them. "When that little light bulb goes off for the student, I am overjoyed. I love being an agent of growth for others," she says. She also teaches with humor because she believes that laughter helps lower language anxiety and thereby stimulate the learning process. In many of her classes, she has led field trips to various places. She believes in experiencing the language when at all possible. "I hope my students get as much enjoyment out of my teaching as I get out of teaching them," she says. The popularity of her classes proves that this is a two way relationship. Oh, yes, I almost forgot. There is a fourth L....Lori is planning a trip to London in the near future!

## **CALENDAR**

Monday, February 9, CCIS Board Meeting, 10:00 A.M.

Sunday, February 15, Potluck/Music Night

Friday, February 20, Morning Coffee Spring Swap - 10:00 A.M.

Monday, March 9, CCIS Board Meeting, 10:00 A.M.

Wednesday, March 25, Reception for EIA, Homestay, & Hospitality Volunteers, 4:00 – 6:00 P.M.

Monday, April 13, CCIS Board Meeting, 10:00 A.M.

# Stanford University

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**Henry Lum & Bob Spears**



**John Pearson**



**Magdalena Bull, Gwyn Dukes, & friends**



**Dee Gustavson**



**Rob Fraser & friends**



# A page *for our electronic friends*

*This page is for English in Action volunteers, and maybe a few from Hospitality. The idea is to give some suggestions of topics you might want to discuss with your English in Action partner. Not all of EIA is vocabulary and grammar, and, hopefully, old war stories.*

## **An EIA notebook...or folder or wherever you collect items**

During the interviews with the EIA chairs, Dee Gustavson made a practical suggestion for the first meeting with a new EIA partner. Why not bring a family photo album and encourage your EIA partner to do the same thing. Photos are easy things to talk about, and you may be surprised at how quickly your international partner stops thinking that they are speaking English. While talking about people they know they may forget that they are speaking English. And as they see pictures of your family, home, backyard barbecues, and vacation trips questions come quickly to their mind.

That got me to thinking about creating your own album of the EIA experience. During the course of the year a multitude of topics will be discussed and questions asked. From time to time you may give them copies of things that are helpful for their visit: maps of the Bay Area, California, and the United States. The brochure of the 49 Mile Drive. Menus that you, or they, have downloaded from restaurants that they have gone to. Lists of vocabulary and slang that they have learned. Maybe you have walked the campus, visited the Cantor Museum, checked out grocery stores. It's all free and memorable. Did you, or they, take any photographs on an iPhone that can be printed. Pay attention to local events. Obviously Big Game may come to mind, and so too the holidays. What is Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, Mothers Day, The Fourth of July, Thanksgiving? Are any of them celebrated in their country? We know all this stuff because we learned it growing up. They didn't. If they came in an even numbers year, there was a political election. Before you trash the campaign mail, ask them if they would like some of it. The California Voters Pamphlet is free and can be obtained in a variety of languages: Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, and Korean. Does your partner speak one of those languages? Imagine what their friends will say when they show them a sample California ballot.

Encourage them to think of themselves as journalists who are telling what America is all about.

I began collecting stories when my partner's asked questions. It began when we planned a trip to southern California, and then expanded and expanded. The topics now include: highlights of San Diego, Los Angeles, Coastal California, San Francisco, the Bay Area, and yes, the 49 Mile Drive. Television and radio stations, American Culture (churches, volunteering, and hobbies and recreationists), California architecture (Stanford, Solvang, the Disney Hall in LA, and the Sundial bridge in Redding), a chart showing the American System of Government (which was included in the Electronic edition of the Spring 2010), American superstitions, American holidays, words borrowed from other languages, colorful English (figures of speech, slang, sports lingo, country and western lyrics), and more.

Well, my partners tell me that it is valuable for them, and they take it when they return home. For me the stuff is easy to collect. At this level of sophistication with people who are becoming culturally as well as linguistically fluent, Wikipedia is a great source. And you don't even have to type it. Cut and paste.