

THE CELAC STUDENT VOICE

Death Can Bring Life

by Perla Maldonado Cortez

Femicide has become a political issue in Mexico. The State apparatus has taken advantage of inclusion of the murder of women in their political speeches; however, the discourses say one thing, but public policies and political agendas say another. There is not a clear political will to resolve femicides. Nevertheless, this issue has triggered positive and admirable situations that give the impression that all is not lost. There are cases of incredible women who have left their homes to demand justice for their daughters (who were victims of femicide or are missing). They have become seekers of the dead, social fighters, and examples of life for the Mexican society. For those valiant mothers, every protest or demand for justice is an opportunity to raise their voices and make their cases known, but it also reopens deep and painful wounds. These courageous women carry a shadow of pain; however, with their fear, hope, grief, and bravery, they have been the light of a dark path that seemed to have no end.

After so many years of crisis for women in Mexico, they say enough! There are many good examples of women who are changing their panoramas, and from their own trenches, they are also changing the national panorama. Women in Mexico are increasingly aware that being a woman is not synonymous with collecting scratches, wounds, scars, and death. In addition, women are beginning to recognize other problems and struggles in order to break the rules of their "traditional assembly," assemblages of a strong "tradition", which says that the brain in a woman is dispensable, the heart of a woman must feed on frivolities, and a woman must remain in silence. Now, Mexican women are learning to not remain silent and raise their voices in the face of injustice, common discrimination, and death because if they remain silent, they will continue to be ignored and murdered. They fight for life and for the dignity, that for many years, men and political structures have tried to snatch away. Women are accompanying each other, and they are listening to other voices and stories that they know are foreign, but at the same time their own. In Mexico, a new generation of conscious women and feminists is being created because death has brought life, and now there are women without fear.

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To Be a Stepping Stone Toward a Dream

by *Liliana Alva Regalado*

"I am not able to travel around the world now, but I have students from different countries around the world, so I really enjoy my job because I can know many countries through my students." Those are the words from Bart Hill, who in this 2020 turns 10 years teaching English As A Second Language in the Center of English Language and American Culture (CELAC) of UNM.

I remembered Bart Hill on my first day at CELAC when I did my speaking test. My mistakes were much more than I am doing right now, but he always was educated, formal and kind. On my first semester at CELAC, he used to be my Grammar and Listening teacher, and I am sure he used to be your teacher, too. So I interviewed him during CELAC's field trip to El Morro. By the way, he organized the field trip, too.

"Every language is unique and difficult to learn," says Bart when I asked about the difficulties of learning English as a second language. "One of the keys to learn English is the students' motivations and interest." The students need to find the way for to enjoy learning English in order to improve their skills. For example, he said, some students enjoy reading, so maybe they can find an author they like to read; others may be oral learners, so they can watch movies, or listen to the radio or songs. Sometimes, it is too difficult to learn the spelling of English words because they are from Latin, Spanish, France and others languages. "Over all, English can be a challenge but if you are in a speaking English environment, if you are motivated, if you are confident, you can do it," said Bart, smiling.

Before being a teacher at CELAC, he used to be a volunteer at the Center helping international students on grammar, and for three years (2006-2009), he taught English in Seoul, Korea. "The students' population is very special at CELAC, and this was one of the reasons I decided to work here. I can't travel around the world, so the world comes to me (with the students); for example, I'm no able to travel to Arabia Saudi right now, but I have a student from Saudi Arabia."

"The students motivate me for to work on CELAC. Also, I like to teach English as a second language because you see the growth of the students; typically, I see a lot of students who are not confident to speak or to write a lot, but it doesn't matter because in three or four months or one semester, their improvement is real" he said.

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Bart Hill is one of the five current teachers at CELAC, a place that throughout 40 years has been helping foreign students to learn English. "I think that working at CELAC, we can be a stepping stone for the students' dreams. What kind of dreams? They can go on to UNM or find a job, or go back to their home country; whatever it is, I feel honored to be part of their process" he said at last with a friendly smile on his face.

Featured Essay: Why people from Central America Flee for the U.S.

by Belkis Garcia (*High Intermediate*)

I am one of the fortunate people from Honduras here in the U.S. because I have a student visa. Many people from my country who are looking to build a better life for themselves in the U.S. are being stopped at the border because of current immigration policy under the Trump administration. The economy in Honduras is marked by high unemployment, expensive goods and services, and unpredictable electrical power availability. These are a few of the reasons people are fleeing to the U.S. from Honduras.

High unemployment is a huge problem in Honduras. Finding a good job in my country is difficult mainly because people do not have a good education or skills. There aren't opportunities for young people to find jobs. The corruption in the government controls the price of gas, which makes it very expensive. In fact, all prices are too expensive. For example, food, electricity, and taxes. If foreign investors could work with Central Americans to help build a stronger economy, people would likely stay where they live, have families, and have a history with their country. In Honduras, however, corruption in government high taxes and a poor economy make it impossible for families to make a good life for themselves and their children.

According to an article in the Wall Street Journal, the demand for drugs in the United States has helped make Central American the main corridor used by organized crime for trafficking drugs: "Drug trafficking has put billions of dollars into criminals' pockets over whelming the regions weak law enforcement." While the United States has given some aid to Honduras, it has been mostly for nonprofits that work to advance the social and economic agenda of America and has achieved little else.

Finally, the Central American political classes must pass necessary political economic reforms. People need to be able to have good jobs and dependable electricity power. Everyone should be able to has a good education and opportunities to build good lives for themselves and their children.





Is divorce a good thing to do?

by Mona Al-Dweik

Every country has its own culture, religion, beliefs, and laws. A lot of countries consider divorce one of the things that is not acceptable and it is unforgivable, yet a lot of people are suffering in their marriages and they can't divorce because of their culture, religion, etc. Some people believe that divorce is a curse, and we can't do it because it is going to make us so miserable in our lives, or other people especially women, will refuse to be divorced because her culture won't have mercy on her; her people will always blame her even if she didn't do anything, or even they don't know what really happened. In my opinion, sometimes divorce is the best solution for some cases and for a lot of reasons that I will cover them in my essay.

First, some people have a lot of bad habits or serious issues that can't be acceptable for the partner, such as drinking, cheating, taking drugs, and hitting, especially for women. These things no one can handle or live with and these habits are the main reasons that a lot of marriages have ended. A lot of women are hit or insulted because her husband thinks that he is the man and by doing this he will be strong and he can control everything. According to a study that was done by NCADV, women between the ages of 18-24 are most commonly abused by an intimate partner.

Second, in some couples, their partners have health issues, and some of these issues can't be cured, or may harm the other partner such as, Aids, Schizophrenia, etc. These diseases can affect the marriage and it can end it. For this reason, a lot of couples choose divorce as a good solution for them. However, some people choose to stay with their partner until he/she gets better which I totally respect, or they will choose to be divorced because it may affect the partner in their health, but they will stand for each other even if they are not married anymore.

Finally, some marriages end because it keeps getting worse. A lot of stuff will get out of control because there is no connection between the couple, and one of the most important standards in marriage is to have a good connection. When couples lose connection, the love will fade, and when there is no love there is no respect, or passion in the relation which means they lost the most important bond.

In conclusion, sometimes culture can be wrong because people in the past are not like now, and we can't compare life in the past as it is now. Technically, when it comes to divorce, there is no right or wrong answer because it depends on the case; some cases don't make any sense, like asking for divorce because one can't travel every month—you may laugh when hear this example, but unfortunately it is true. To have a good life with your partner, you need to use your brain before choosing your partner; sometimes your heart gives you the wrong answer, so be a wise person.

Cata Says Goodbye

By Catalina Cardenas

Hi every one! it is going to be my last publication in the CELAC student voice. I am thankful to God for the opportunity of being part of CELAC. Here I have met wonderful people and today, it is really difficult to say goodbye. Thank you for all the happy moments that we had together and for let me know a little bit more about your culture and traditions.

Natalie, Carla, Bart, Jet and Grandon, thank you for your dedication and patience and for your hard work helping us to be better professionals. Thank you for your advice and your help when I was applying to my master degree, I really appreciate all your support. Thank you doctor Paul and Vanessa for your support when I needed it, and for your help during this process of learning English.

Vanessa thank you for your guidance, when I was applying to my program and for listening to me, when I had hard times deciding what I wanted to study. I just wanted to mention this because all of us sometimes have difficult moments deciding what we want for our lives. Sometimes we take really bad decision because we are not thinking in the future.

Thank you academic bridge classmates Abdul, Gap, Albert, Crystal and Youhee to work with me in this process for almost two years; this is our first step to achieve our goals!

I will miss you a lot my friends!
Thank you !



Feng Shui

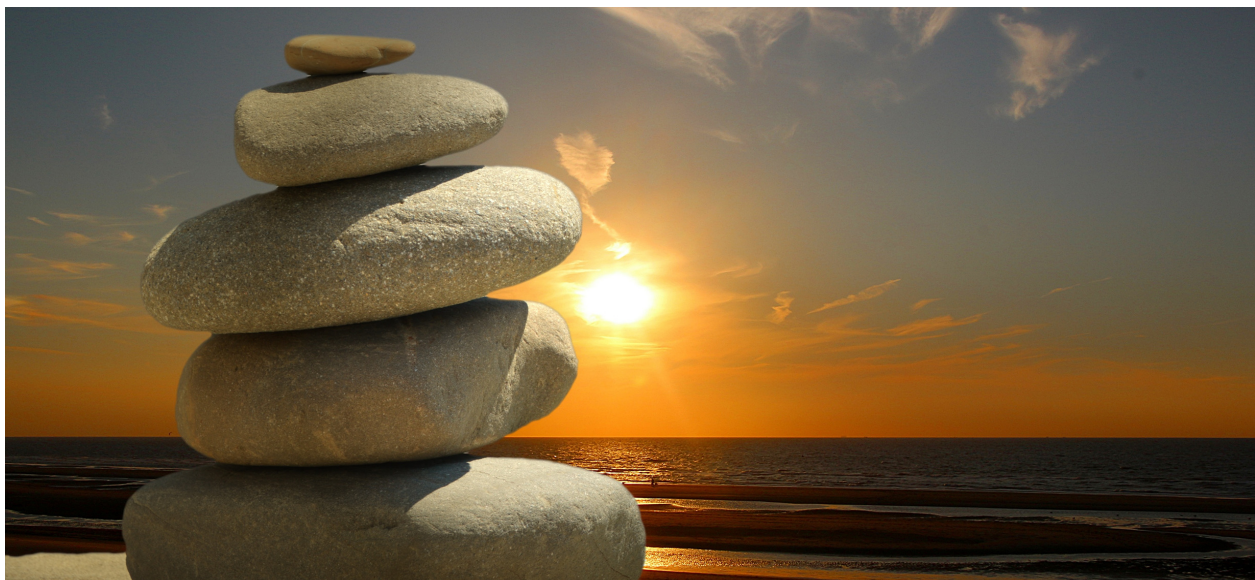
by Abdul Bahri

Feng Shui (pronounced fung schway) is an old common practice that focuses on establishing harmony and good luck. It also means “wind” and “water” in Chinese. Practitioners consider that the configuration of the elements in our daily lives can impact many aspects, like fortune, health, wealth, and happiness. Ch'i (“Chee”) is an invisible life energy or force that spreads through things such as walls, rooms, and buildings. Things go fully if ch'i streams nicely and smoothly in the buildings. People might feel annoyed or upset if ch'i is blocking the space. I will tell you some elements that may help you light your house or room.

One of the most fundamental principles in Feng Shui is called the “commanding position,” and it basically means that certain objects should be facing the entry door. The most important objects to place in the command position are the bed and desk. The reason behind this is that the main door of your house or room is the portal through where the energy comes and enters into your life. It is better to see the door while you are sitting in your desk or lying in your bed but not directly with it. It is best to be diagonal to the door while still facing it. Unfortunately, this way is not always possible, but there is another way to face or to see the door, at least. You can place a mirror to help you see the door in the reflection.

Another important element that may make your life flow smoothly is clearing your house from clutters. While this may seem like an obvious problem to look around the house, we are all too guilty of accumulating useless items that don't play a specific function in the home. An excessive amount of clutter stops us from having clarity of thought, and can weigh us down emotionally. So, get rid of everything you do not love in your house. In addition, make sure that you have the correct organization in place for everything in your life. Do not skip this step; it is essential for creating a harmonious house. It is because you will feel lighter and more efficient.

In conclusion, Feng Shui started in the eastern countries and now this ancient art has migrated to the western countries. Nowadays, a lot of people practice this to change their life for the better. There are more factors, but I have mentioned the most common and practical elements that people do to lighten their lives. These factors are facing the door to let the energy come, and cleaning the house from the clutters to feel lighter. I have organized my apartment based on Fung Shui. Will you organize your house or apartment based on Fung Shui?



I woke up from the American Dream

Part 1

by Miguel Emiliano Rivera Sandoval



Author Disclaimer: Everything in this story is fictional

America is a country of contrast. I remember when I first came here. Technically, this is not my first time in the USA because when I was a kid I went to the city of McAllen in Texas on a tourist visa. Although the streets and buildings were different, my visit was too short and the overwhelming Mexican majority in McAllen didn't let me really appreciate a different culture. Around 9 years has passed since, and now with 21 years this is my first time living alone and in the United States.

It was January 7th, 2019 when I arrived to the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico. In the previous six months, I saved all the money I could and lease big amounts of money from several family members. When the plane landed and stopped in the runway, I felt very excited. I thought, "This is the start of something new, something big" and is not an exaggeration because the United States is known in all the world for being "The land of opportunities". The land where doesn't matter your social status, economic status, ethnicity, preferences or religion, everyone can achieve their dreams. At least that is what Americans and migrants alike like to believe in.

I passed through migration and then Lily (I'm using a different name to protect her identity), an average middle aged American woman, received me. She was everything Hollywood taught me about the United States; tall, blond, somehow slim, seemed to be a decent person, successful, with her own car, her own house and if all of that weren't enough she was an altruist person who received "third world" students in her own house. She greeted me very enthusiastically and took me to her car.

"American Dream," cont.

In the way to her house, I was perplexed by the City Landscape. America is literally like the movies: Perfect and shiny roads, wooden beautiful big houses, lots of businesses, lots of cars, and a city that seemed vibrant and prosperous. I was so amazed by the materialized American civilization that I didn't listened at all to Lily's questions she made trying to know me better.

This first phase of enchantment and amazingness about the US lasted around one month. When we arrived to her house, I just found that she and her family were even more perfect. She had a Husband, Robert, which she knew since they were kids and married. She had four daughters with or studying their degrees and one son in the navy. I was treated like another family member and provided with food and a room to sleep. Everything seemed perfect.

The next days I got to know one of Lily's daughters, Joy. She was studying at UNM, in the field of sciences, and worked in the labs. She was the first person that made me start to awaken from the American Dream.

When we four first sat to dinner for the first time, Robert said "Hey Joy, did you knew about this new study about willpower trumping induced electrical impulses in the brain? That is maybe a proof for the soul" and that triggered a Joy's argue with her parents, making it a really awkward moment but a deeper insight in the family relationships.

She argued about the mechanist side of the human body, and pragmatism meanwhile their parents, who are very religious people, argued about the spirit and faith and god plans. The dinner ended with a bittersweet desert (That by the way, I'm amazed by the quantities of fat, carbs and sugar in the average American diet) and I decided to approach Joy to ask her about her point of view. She was tired, emotionally and physically of all the effort, she had to spend in her school and her long shift work hours. And Overall, I noticed that she was deeply frustrated of not being able to do a real change in the world we are living. She lived abroad in a South American country for a while and we talk about the lack of human development in the region, the poverty, the corruption that drained the economy of those countries and how generally older generations obstruct any attempt of doing a change.

Then a week later, I moved to the university dorms. The first thing you notice there is the silence. Coming from a big city as Mexico City, I had learned that whenever there is a lot of people there is going to be noise and life but the dorms were the exact opposite. Emptiness, secretiveness, silence. I walked through the hall and saw walls with very striking designs and colorful collages but the habitants there gave me the opposite message. People walking quietly through the hall, lost looks, people staring me in a very threatening way, people getting in their rooms quickly and slamming the door in the process – "PAM!". Closed doors, dark hallways.

I arrived to my room and finally found some signals of life: pictures, notebooks, a fridge with half-eaten rotting food, a PlayStation. Dylan, my roommate, was still out of town for winter break. Two days after, I was coming back from an altruist dinner for international students when I opened the door, and there he was. Dylan and his old roommate friend were chatting and laughing when I came into the room. He started to ask me all kind of questions but always with a sarcastic and distanced tone. I saw his face expression and I thought "He don't like me, his old roommate and friend is going abroad and he will stay with a stranger from the country his parents had to migrate to get a better life, we are not going to get along very well".

"American Dream," cont.

And don't get me wrong, I was not being prejudiced with him but Dylan wasn't the average American school student. He is a very reserved person; he doesn't go out very often and enjoys a lot playing video games inside our room (A lot, really, A LOT). He has Mexican ascendance because of his parents and he is from Los Angeles, California. In the other side, I am a very energetic person that gets bored easily. I'm always distracted from class and looking for adventures and new experiences. Surprisingly, in this almost 4 months we have been living together, we have get along very well! Dylan started to orient me in this new world, cultural shocks were at the order of the day "Why people don't say good morning or good afternoon so often? Why people don't thank you when you open the door for them? Why everyone seem so busy in their own worlds? Why people ask me so often my ethnicity and my degree or job?" The first real disappointment with the American Dream was in my first weekend after classes.

I went to a party hosted in the house of someone I did not know and full of people I do not know, a friend of a friend I made in UNM. I was excited because I did not knew what to expect. The party was the typical American college party that Hollywood movies depict: beer pong, trap music, lots of people, and unfortunately illegal substances consumption. There was plenty of that, some people smoking, inhaling and taking pills. Someone that I do not know told me more about it "This is the cup of coffee of America" referring to a substance that need to be inhaled. I never saw any of the persons that went to the party again, and from there, the American dream kept falling down into a bad dream.

I quickly found out that in order to move in America you need a car. Albuquerque has a public transportation system, but is TERRIBLE. The first time I wanted to took the bus I waited 30 minutes to one to come. The first thing you notice when you get on the bus is that is full of people of the most vulnerable social groups: Elders, Low-income people, African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Homeless people and disabled people. To be honest with you is kind of depressing and sad to experience this first hand. In the United States is so strong the car and the private property culture that the government and people forget about the most needed. Once I heard a saying that goes, "A first world country is not where all the people go in car is where the rich take the public transportation."

After an hour trip, that could last 20 minutes as much in car, I arrived to the Social Security office. I went there because I needed to ask for a temporal social security number in order to work on campus as the law establish. The social security office is a world by itself, people from all backgrounds and social levels, a bomb threat that make me evacuate the building, a supervisor getting out of his cabin to put order and make a list pass. Somehow, the social security office remembered me to my home country Mexico, because of the long waiting times and all the bureaucracy needed to do anything.

After 2 failed attempts to get my social security card mailed I tried a third one, this time with the help of a friend of my I made here: Earl. Earl gave me a ride to the social security office in his old but very-proud-to-own pickup truck, and when he dropped me in front of the social security office, I thanked him with a "Gracias güey". This action was observed by a security guard of the SSO that shouted at me "You CAN'T enter with KNIFES in a federal building?" . I was confused at his statement and after a second I replied, "Why do you say that?" . - "I just was saying, if you have any knives leave them in your friend truck before he leaves", - "I am a student, why would I have a knife?" I finally replied and left him without answer.

Earl told me that because of our 'Hispanic' looks and our use of the Spanish language, the guard must've thought that we had knives. And that this kind of experiences with authorities are very common in the United States because the police and law enforcement agencies act based on 'profiles' of who is the most probable criminal because of their look. Something that even in Mexico would be called Racism, but that in the U.S is apparently normal to keep teaching in law enforcing academies.

"American Dream," cont.

After my first two months here in Albuquerque, I met again with Lily, the woman who married the first and only man she ever knew, and truly loved her in life. I asked to my family to send me a gift from Mexico to thank her for receiving me when I first arrived here knowing nothing and no one. We chatted and laughed, she gave me some desert and she drove me to my room again. Random conversation topics started to appear and somehow, just when we arrived to my dorms we started to talk about immigration. Yes, specifically illegal immigration from Mexico and Central American countries. In an act of trust and in the bustle of the conversation she trusted me that she was a Trump supported. "People have called me hater, when I receive internationals in my house. Pff, can you believe it?" she said - "I just don't want them to come and take advantage of my taxes, of our medical services, of our schools". I heard her said at the same time I had to eat my words and emotions, to try to explain her that what she was saying is misleading, and actually based on the most conservative estimation of the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) at least half of the undocumented migrants pay taxes (Vox, 2018). In addition, at the most conservative estimate they payed 23.6 BILLION dollars in Taxes.

I felt emotionally conflicted, hearing a lot of misleading and false information from the person that gave me shelter. Knowing that she thinks that - "America is the best country of the world, there is no better place to be but here, and if they want to come I don't have a problem but they have to come legally". How could I explain her that almost every one and all of them come here escaping poverty, escaping less than \$1 a day wages, escaping gangs that if you don't pay them a tax to live they kill you?. How could I show her that the Mexican and Central American countries governments are of the most corrupt in the planet (Transparency International, 2019), and that a politician called Javier Duarte Ochoa, supplied to a pediatric oncology hospital with water instead of medicine so he could steal federal money?

That people in the Mexican sierra don't have schools, don't have electricity or water and that because of that a lot of them decide to come to the United States. That the U.S protect criminals that stole federal money, trade with the drug dealers that the DEA are looking for, and ordered to kill people for their benefit such as Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Felipe Calderon Hinojosa or Juan Orlando Hernandez. Moreover, that Journalists who uncover this were death threatened and now live here such as Anabel Hernandez or Jorge Ramos. That the United States of America government has a huge responsibility on all this because the governments they support are the governments who support the interest of the white old rich minority even if they go against the will of an entire country, like the Guatemala coup of 1954, the operation Just Cause or the dictatorship of Pinochet.

I just couldn't, because if I had done it I would've destroyed her beautiful perfect world of white and black, of good guys and bad guys, of the rest of the world and The United States of America and then, I would be the monster. Because she gave me shelter, no matter her reasons, and if it wasn't because of her I would've been on the streets and maybe I wouldn't be able to attend to CELAC classes. The only thing I was able to do was to assent with the head, agree and greet her with a good bye and a hand move, meanwhile I was watching her drive away.

In the next part of this article, I will talk about positive experiences in the United States of America. I will talk about many people I meet that work every day to make a positive change in their environments and in their communities. In addition, I will tell what I think is the biggest issue right now in this great country and how we can solve it and look forward to a brighter future for everyone.

The Staff of the CELAC Student Voice



Mona Al-Dweik

Mona is from Jordan and enjoys sports and reading in her free time.



Catalina Cardenas

My name is Maria Catalina Cardenas Garcia. I am from Colombia. I was born in Bogota. I studied Finance and Business Administration at the Sergio Arboleda University. I am so happy living in Albuquerque and enjoying this new experience in my life. I prefer outdoors activities, so that I like hiking and playing volleyball.



Andre Massuda

André Massuda is from Brazil, CELAC's student, Alice's father, and Priscila's Husband. Makes your own beer and Corinthians FC fan.



Liliana Alva Regalado

Liliana likes to write, walk and learn about cultures. Her major is Journalism. She graduated from a local university in her city Morelia, Mexico. She worked in local newspapers and taught Spanish in a government school. Last year she changed her residence to the land of enchantment in Albuquerque



Miguel Emiliano Rivera Sandoval

Emiliano Rivera, is originally from Mexico City. He is 21 years old and his hobbies are writing and cycling.



Abdul Bahri

I am Abdulrhman Bahri. I am from Saudi Arabia. I am a video gamer. I also like soccer. Thank you and have a nice week!



Perla Maldonado Cortez

I am Perla Maldonado from Mexico. I like to read, run, and spend time on the internet.