

THE NEW COURIER

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Institut d'Estudis Nord-Americans

Monthly Publication



Jordi Pujol

Lecture by Jordi Pujol at the IEN

Mr. Jordi Pujol i Soley, who was President of the Generalitat de Catalunya for the last 23 years, will give a lecture at the Institute of North American Studies on:

"The relations of Catalunya and Spain with respect to Europe and North America"

Mr. Pujol got his degree in medicine and became politically involved in the Christian-

inspired university pro-Catalan movement. In 1974, he went into political action in the founding of the Catalan democratic convergence party (Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya), of which he was the first secretary. He was elected President of the Generalitat in 1980 and was re-elected in the autonomous elections of 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995, and 1999. The political stature of Jordi Pujol reflects not only his government work, but also his public appearances in the form of speeches, lectures and declarations, which serve as a reference to his thoughts on Catalan as well as Spanish and international politics.

Blood Drive Day

Among the criteria used by the World Health Organization to measure the medical efficiency of a country is the country's success in obtaining one blood donation for every 20 inhabitants. Nine out of ten people need a blood donation at some time in their lives. Unfortunately, due to lack of voluntary blood donations, we cannot count on having enough blood in time, especially in medical emergencies.

Accident and burn victims, those with blood-related cancer, and others who need an urgent blood transfusion find themselves alone and helpless, and the search for suitable donors becomes a very difficult mission. For this reason, and to help all the people who need it, in cooperation with the Hospital Clinic de Barcelona, and with the support of the IEN (with use of

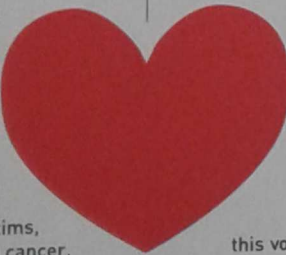
their facilities), the American Society of Barcelona is promoting a Blood Donation Drive. We invite and encourage all of our members, their families and friends, as well as those of the IEN and the public, to support this initiative and very worthwhile cause.

The procedure for donating blood is simple, safe and only takes 40 minutes – the outcome of which can help to save a life.

Please cooperate in this voluntary act. We need the solidarity of people like you. It doesn't cost anything and it will be a great help. Many people will be grateful to you.

We'll be waiting for you on April 24th from 10 AM to 1:30 PM at the IEN

For more information, please contact the American Society of Barcelona, www.amersoc.com or 696 751 645



April Fools' Day

What is April Fools' Day and how did it begin? Well, that is a very good question. The origin of this holiday is rather uncertain. However, the common belief holds that during the reformation of the calendar the date for the New Year was moved from April 1st to January 1st. During that time in history, with there no television and no radio, word spread slowly. There were also those who chose to simply ignore the change and those who merely forgot. These people were considered "fools" and invitations to non-existent parties and other practical jokes were played on them. "All Fools' Day" is practiced in many parts of the world with

practical jokes and sending people on a fool's errand.

In the United States, pranks are played on just about everybody. Pranks range from the standard "Your shoe is untied", to some very creative and elaborate ideas. The only "rule" is that no one should be harmed. The best jokes are when everybody including the victim laughs.

"The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year".

(American humorist Mark Twain)

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YOU STILL DON'T KNOW HOW TO DANCE THE LINDY HOP?
What are you waiting for?
Enjoy dancing while you practice your English.



Every Monday and Tuesday at the IEN

REMEMBER! NEXT MONTH YOU CAN TAKE THE MICHIGAN ECCE

The ECCE (Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English) is the official English language examination offered by the University of Michigan that measures competency in English at an upper-intermediate level, and is the North American alternative to the Cambridge First Certificate Exam.

The Examination may be useful for adolescents wishing some external measure of their competence in English, or adults wishing to obtain documentation for employment or promotion purposes, international business, or tourism. We recommend the exam for adults who have completed the Institute's Upper Intermediate 2 and above.

TEST REGISTRATION:

May 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 (9:30 AM - 2:00 PM and 4:00 - 7:00 PM)

TEST DATES

Speaking Test:

May 18

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

May 19

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

and 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

May 20

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

and 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Written Test:

May 21

9:30 AM - 1:00 PM

TEST PRICE:

150€

Price for IEN Students: 135€

*If you have any questions, please contact the Academic Office at 93 240 51 10

If you are under 18, travel this summer to Europe or the Usa with the IEN and Interway

This summer, thanks to an agreement between the Institute of North American Studies and INTERWAY, the younger students of the IEN can study English in the USA or other European countries. Interway, a company that has been offering language courses abroad for more than two decades, is the leader in its field with the Certification of Quality ISO9002/94.

INTERWAY is offering IEN students a special 5% discount on all courses abroad, including those in the USA.

UNITED STATES AND CANADA GENERAL PROGRAMS:

Classes + accommodation with a family or in a residence hall + activities and excursions
Maryland, New York (Rochester), Massachusetts (Boston), Florida, California (Los Angeles, San Francisco), the Midwest and Québec (Montreal)

SPECIAL PROGRAMS: CALIFORNIA DREAMING,

Excursions + activities, cinema and surfing

Excursions & activities: It is a program where you live with families in southern California, with 12 excursions and other cultural activities, and sports for students ages 13 to 18.

Film: Students can write, shoot and edit their own video films. This includes visits to Hollywood and to a US television studio.

Surfing: Students will have the possibility to go surfing on the waves of the Pacific in southern California. There are 12 surfing classes a week plus three all-day excursions and six midday activities.

MIDWEST + ENGLISH OR TENNIS

Here students live with families and have 40 English classes or 40 hours of tennis classes for five weeks in the Midwest, in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota or Wisconsin. The classes are held in public schools in the towns and are given by US teachers.

MINNESOTA - CAMPING

This is a 5-week experience in the state of Minnesota. It is a combination of living with families part of the time and 10 days in an American summer camp (Camp Warren).

ENGLAND AND IRELAND

Classes + accommodation with a family or in a residence hall + activities and excursions

*If you are interested, visit our Client Services department at the IEN or call 93 240 51 10, Monday to Friday from 1 PM to 8:30 PM

FILM CLUB

American Independents Cycle

This month we will show:

Film: "Being John Malkovich"

Best 1st Film at the Spirit Awards Festival 1999

Film: "Election"

Best Film and best Director at the Spirit Awards Festival 1999



BEING JOHN MALKOVICH

This is a movie that adamantly refuses to observe the conventions of cinematic storytelling or succumb to real-world logic. Charlie Kaufman, the writer of "Being John Malkovich," supplies a stream of dazzling inventions, twists and wicked paradoxes. And the director, Spike Jonze, doesn't pounce on each one like fresh prey, but unveils it slyly, as if there's more where that came from. Rare is the movie where the last half hour surprises you just as much as the first, and in ways you're not expecting.

The movie has ideas enough for half a dozen films, but Jonze and his cast handle them so surely that we never feel hard-pressed; we're enchanted by one development after the next.

The film raises questions about the nature of identity, and how some people are only completely free when their real self is hidden behind a mask or beneath a costume. With Craig as a puppet-master and Maxine playing him like a musical instrument, issues of manipulation rise to the surface. How much of what we do in our day-to-day lives involves attempting to pull the strings of others, or having our own strings pulled?

For those who like to see the dark side of things, the film offers unsettling threads on the annihilation of identity and the price of immortality.

Free! Wednesday, April 14th, at 7:00 PM, IEN Theater



ELECTION

This is a dark, satirical comedy, less about the high school characters involved in the Election hurricane than the middle-aged man (Broderick) standing in its eye. Tracy Flick (Reese Witherspoon) is merely a foil used to highlight the failings of anti-hero Mr. McAllister, who convinces himself he hates Tracy when he is secretly jealous of her ambition and success. As in Payne's other films, the main characters in Election lie to themselves about their feelings, motives, desires, et al. The viewer's recognition of these contradictions is integral to their understanding and enjoyment of the film.

Election serves not just as an acerbic attack on high school politics, but as an

attack on politics in general. The film features four dead-on performances; Broderick and Witherspoon both show masterful comic timing, but also give their characters depth. Chris Klein is wonderful as Paul Metzler, the big, stupid, lovable jock oaf who runs against Tracy; Jessica Campbell is also great as Paul's laconic, lesbian sister. Payne observes these people with such immaculate objectivity and seething irony that you can't help but like them all, even with their flaws. In short, Election is what satire is all about.

Free! Wednesday, April 28th, at 7:00 PM, IEN Theater

SPEAKEASY BAR



The Speakeasy Bar is the next-most-popular place at the IEN after the classroom and the library! Here, you can practice your English with fellow students and teachers while enjoying a real American chocolate chip cookie or slice of carrot cake. Javier and Laura, the bartenders, provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Don't forget that, weather permitting, you can enjoy your drinks and snacks and munchies on our fantastic terrace! We'll be looking for you at the Speakeasy Bar!

Jubilee Jazz Club

April Calendar



April 15th

JAZZ SERIES:
COUNT BASIE CENTENARY
Directed by Daniel Carbonell



April 29th

BIX BEIDERBECKE
Directed by Alfredo Papo

Free! Thursday, April 15th
and 29th at 8:00 PM, IEN
Conference Room

AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

A Brief April Fools' Day History

The origins of April Fools' Day have never really been determined. Some speculate that it derives from an ancient New Year festival celebrated at the vernal equinox. It bears certain resemblances to Hilaria, an ancient Roman festival in honor of a nature goddess, which was celebrated on March 25th. Most likely, however, the day is of independent origin. But whatever its roots, the timing of April Fools' Day is certainly appropriate, since it occurs during that part of the year when nature fools men with capricious changes from showers to sunshine.

The April date of the holiday is supposedly derived from France, following the Gregorian calendar change of 1582 when the New Year was moved from March 25th to January 1st. Gifts and

visits had always been exchanged at the New Year season, which ended on April 1st. With the change in dates, the more conservative and forgetful Frenchmen were ridiculed with mock gifts and visits of trumped-up solemnity.

"a day to play practical jokes on others, send people on fool's errands, and fool the unsuspecting"

The practice of April-fooling in England is said to have begun the eighteenth century; the English did not reform their calendar until 1752. April Fools' Day is traditionally a day to play practical

jokes on others, send people on fool's errands, and fool the unsuspecting.

Each country celebrates April Fools' differently. In France, the April Fools' is called "April Fish" (Poisson d'Avril). The French fool their friends by taping a paper fish to their friends' backs and when some discovers this trick, they yell "Poisson d'Avril!"

In England, tricks can be played only in the morning. If a trick is played on you, you are a "noodle". In Scotland, April Fools' Day is 48 hours long and you are called an "April Gowk", which is another name for a cuckoo bird. The second day in Scotland's April Fools' is called Taily Day and is dedicated to pranks involving the buttocks. Taily Day's gift to posterior posterity is the still-hilarious "Kick Me" sign.

In America, people play small tricks on friends, and strangers alike, on the first of April. Pranks performed on that day range from the simple and common trick that is pointing down to a friend's shoe and saying, "Your shoelace is untied" to more elaborate ones. Teachers in the nineteenth century used to say to pupils, "Look! A flock of geese!" and point up. School children might tell a classmate that school has been canceled. Whatever the trick, if the innocent victim falls for the joke, the prankster yells, "April Fool!"

"a fun little holiday, but a holiday on which you must remain forever vigilant, for you may be the next April Fool!"

April Fools' Day is a "for-fun-only" observance. Nobody is expected to buy gifts or to take their "significant other" out to eat in a fancy restaurant. Nobody gets off work or school. It's simply a fun little holiday, but a holiday on which you must remain forever vigilant, for you may be the next April Fool!

PRANKS

creative ideas that you can do for your family and friends



Alarm Clock

Get a small alarm clock and set it for 3:00 a.m. Hide it under the victim's bed. Once it goes off, he/she won't be able to find it and it will drive him/her nuts.



Eggs-actly

Glue eggs to the carton and ask for eggs in the morning. When the victim gets them the eggs break!



Mouse Trap

Before everyone gets to work on April 1, go into the office and one-by-one, put a piece of tape across the bottom of the mouse, covering the ball. When everyone comes to work and tries to use computer, their mouse won't work.



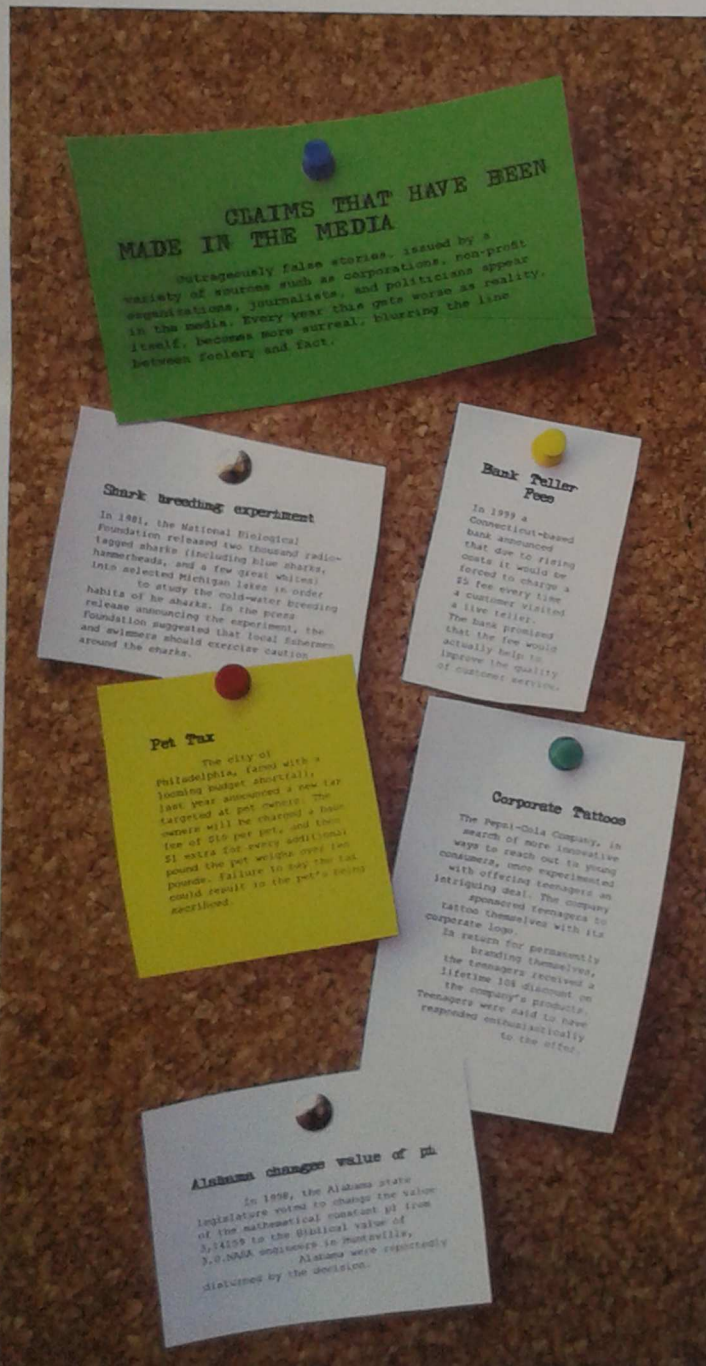
Shower Head Surprise

Turn the shower head (where the water comes out) towards the direction where you enter the shower. Then when someone turns on the shower they get sprayed by themselves turning on the water.



Color the Milk

Choose a bright color of food coloring to add to the milk. Buy it in a cardboard container so nobody can see inside. Make sure you are around when they pour it on their cereal.



CLAIMS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE MEDIA

Outrageously false stories, issued by a variety of sources such as corporations, non-profit organizations, journalists, and politicians appear in the media. Every year this gets worse as reality, itself, becomes more surreal, blurring the line between fantasy and fact.

Shark breeding experiment

In 1981, the National Biological Foundation released two thousand radio-tagged sharks (including blue sharks, hammerheads, and a few great whites) into selected Michigan lakes in order to study the cold-water breeding habits of the sharks. In the press release announcing the experiment, the foundation suggested that local fishermen and swimmers should exercise caution around the sharks.

Pet Tax

The city of Philadelphia, famed with a booming budget shortfalls, last year announced a new tax targeted at pet owners. The tax would be charged a fee of \$10 per pet and then \$1 extra for every additional pound the pet weighs over 100 pounds. Failure to pay the tax could result in the pet being euthanized.

Bank Teller Fees

In 1999 a Connecticut-based bank announced that due to rising costs it would be forced to charge a \$5 fee every time a customer visited a live teller. The bank promised that the fee would actually help to improve the quality of customer service.

Corporate Tattoos

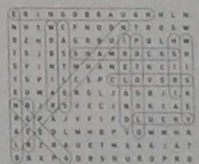
The Pepsi-Cola Company, in search of more innovative consumers, once experimented with offering teenagers an intriguing deal. The company tattoo themselves with its corporate logo. In return for permanently branding themselves, the teenagers received a lifetime 10% discount on the company's products. Teenagers were said to have responded enthusiastically to the offer.

Alabama changes value of pi

In 1898, the Alabama state legislature voted to change the value of the mathematical constant pi from 3.14159 to the biblical value of 22/7. Alabama was reportedly discomfited by the decision.

April Fool's Word Search

April	Gowk	Prank
Bamboozle	Hoax	Silly
Calendar	Hoodwink	Tomfoolery
Dupe	Joke	Trick
Fool	Poisson	



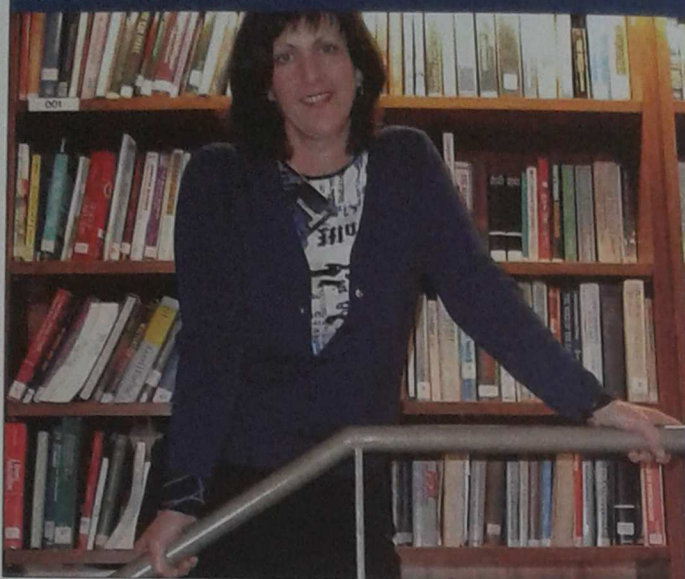
Answers March's Word Search

Y R E I O O F M O T R I C K I
O H A I R I Q H R H K I F I S
C H K D Z I O J L S N L S O C
T V B X N O S S I O P S F L M
C I L E D E B L R W T R X A E
L V O W G U L M P U X M A C D
X X I W V Y P A A Q T L O N E
Y N I D W F H E C B R A H D K
K W O G S N O M T E W W R P O
A W V M O I G C P B H F B A J

*Answers next month

TEACHER'S PROFILE

This month we've talked with Susan Grove.



Where were you born?

In Sacramento, the capitol of California.

What is Sacramento like? If you prepared a trip to your state, what would you recommend visiting?

The downtown area still has lots of charm with its wooden Victorian style houses and a lush covering of trees. Old Sac, right on the American river, grew up in the 1800's in the days of the gold rush and will make you think you're in an old western movie. The capitol building, modelled after the one in Washington, has an impressive park with trees from all over the world. You can visit Sutter's Fort, the earliest outpost when it was considered the Wild West and was still populated by Indians. River sports like rafting and boating are my favourite thing to do on hot summer days. Afterwards, you can pull your boat up and have dinner at some of the riverside restaurants. The rest of the town is my idea of ugly with its endless suburban sprawl and traffic everywhere.

Why did you decide to leave the US and move to Barcelona?

I fell in love with Spain on my first visit here in the early '80's and decided I would come live here

one day. Since I was busy with other things in my life, it took me 15 years to realize that dream, but in the meantime I studied Spanish and came to visit friends that I had in both Barcelona and Mallorca.

Have you always been a teacher?

No, I became a teacher partly to be able to live here, but it was also a natural extension of my growing interest in language after studying Spanish.

What do you like best and least about Barcelona?

People allow more time for socializing here and I like the buzz of life in the streets. The transportation system is great, so it's easy to get around without a car. Sadly it's getting too expensive to live here, especially as a teacher. I have to change flats now and I'm beginning to panic. If anyone knows of a good flat for rent, please tell me!

What about your hobbies and interests?

These days mostly quiet things like cycling, cinema, reading and meals with friends.

Past Events

Jubilee Jazz Club: Live performance
"Xavi Maureta Quartet" February 26th



Round Table:
"US and EU Corporations Post-ENRON"



On March 12th, a round-table discussion on the topic: **US and EU Corporations Post-ENRON**, in which well-known US legal experts from the American Bar Association Rights and International Practices section, Andrew Joshua Markus, Chairman, Kenneth Reisenfeld, Chairman Elect, Michael Byowitz, Vice Chairman, Deborah Enix-Ross, General

Counsel, participated, was held at the IEN. In addition, other participants in the round table were Jaime Malet, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Spain and Ramón Mullarat, Ex-President of the European Union Bar Association Council (Consejo de Colegios de Abogados) and member of the ABA/SILP.

SOURCES

www.april-fools.us, www.homeschooling.about.com, www.movies.go.com, www.hollywood.com, Roger Ebert www.filmmonthly.com, James Berardunelli, Andrew O'Hehir, www.filmfestivals.com Lisa Nesselson, Election by Eric G., Celebrations, the complete book of American Holidays by Robert J. Myers, The American Book of Days by Jane M. Hatch, www.museumofhoaxes.com

April Activities

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY OR EVENT	PLACE
14 Wednesday	7:00 PM	FILM CLUB "Belng John Malkovich" Directed by Spike Jones	Theater
15 Thursday	8:00 PM	JUBILEE JAZZ CLUB Jazz Series: Count Basie Centenary Directed by Daniel Carbonell	Conference Room
21 Wednesday	7:00 PM	FILM CLUB "Election" Directed by Alexander Payne	Theater
28 Wednesday	7:00 PM	CONFERENCE "Les relacions de Catalunya i Espanya respecte a Europa i Nord Amèrica" Directed by Jordi Pujol	Conference Room Theater
29 Thursday	8:00 PM	JUBILEE JAZZ CLUB Bix Bolderbecke Directed by Alfredo Papo	Conference Room

MONTHLY REGULAR EVENTS

Twice a month at 7:00 PM	FILM CLUB in the IEN Theater. American Independents
Every other Thursday at 8:00 PM	JUBILEE JAZZ CLUB Concerts and lectures.
Once a month at 10:30 PM	BASIC DINNER (for Basic 1 through Pre-Intermediate 2)
Once a month at 10:30 PM	DINNER IN ENGLISH (all other levels) Practice your English in a natural setting while you eat, drink, and socialize with IEN teachers and fellow students!

*Tickets are available at the reception desk (approximately €20.00).