Bogár Judit – Erdei József

NAGY CORVINUS NYELVVIZSGAKÖNYV

Angol középfok

A hallott szöveg írott változata

LEXIKA KIADÓ

TEST 1

Part 1

When two Sumatran tigers –Spot and Stripe--were born in Australia Zoo, they were sent to live with one of the keepers for the first four months of their lives. My name is Giles Clark, and I was that keeper. So I would like to tell you now, what happened when I took them home.

Spot and Stripe were not the first tiger cubs I'd raised in my front room. I first did it about 20 years ago, when I was still living in my mum's house in north London. I was working at a small zoo at the time and I hand-reared several lions and tigers.

Now I live in Australia and have worked at the same place for 11 years - these are the first tiger cubs that have ever been born at Australia Zoo. Globally, a third of Sumatran cubs in captivity don't make it to adulthood, so to ensure their survival I decided to give them round the clock care at home. Before they arrived, we rolled up the carpet and put linoleum down on the floor in the house.

I've got two children living at home - the younger, my eight-year-old son Kynan, was particularly excited about the tigers arriving. I wasn't worried about bringing them into my home: these were cubs; they weighed about 2.5 kg and were very small. In four months, they were not going to grow any bigger than a medium-sized puppy. Just like puppies, they do things like chew on your shoes, but that's about the worst you can expect. At the same time, it's very important to keep in mind what they're capable of - these are wild animals, and instinct tells them how to use their teeth and claws.

We let Spot and Stripe roam freely around the house during the day, but when we were asleep we locked them into a large room. They absolutely loved our family dogs Caesar and Ruby, and would play with them as much as with each other. From day one, Spot was extremely affectionate with us, and the better behaved of the two - he always looked for attention and comfort. Stripe was far more playful, and would usually be the one who would jump on his unsuspecting brother.

It took a lot of energy to look after them, and I was grateful that my family was there to help me. We made up formula, washed and sterilized baby bottles and cleaned the floors. However hard it was though, I firmly believe we did the right thing. These cubs are not going back into the wild. In an ideal world I would not want to have tigers in captivity - they belong in the wild. Unfortunately, it's not an ideal world and they are facing extinction. And if I'm going to have them in captivity, I want to give them the best lifestyle that I possibly can.

Other zoos will leave the cubs with their mum for 18 months or even 2.5 years. I believe that taking them away from their mother when they are new-born and hand-rearing them gives them a much better life in captivity because they suffer less stress. We can offer them a whole variety of stimulation and enrichment that otherwise wouldn't be possible.

Part 2

Easter Island's mysterious statues stand on Rapa Nui National Park in silence but speak volumes about the achievements of their creators. The stone blocks, carved into head-and-torso figures, average 13 feet tall and 14 tons. The effort to construct these monuments and move them around the island must have been considerable—but no one knows exactly why the Rapa Nui undertook such a task. Most scientists suspect that they were created to honor their ancestors. As no written and little oral history exist on the island, it's impossible to be certain.

A Polynesian society flourished in this unlikely place after a few brave people somehow navigated a fleet of wooden canoes to this tiny place in the Pacific Ocean. Here, more than 2,000 miles west of South America and 1,000 miles from the nearest neighboring island, the Rapa Nui developed their own architectural and artistic culture. That culture reached its highest point between the 10th and 16th centuries, when the Rapa Nui carved and erected some 900 stone statues across the island.

It is generally thought that the Rapa Nui's downfall resulted from an environmental catastrophe of their own making. It's not clear how quickly the island's ecosystem was ruined—but a major factor appears to be the large scale cutting of giant palm trees to clear fields or make fires. The loss of the trees exposed the island's rich volcanic soils to serious erosion. When Europeans arrived in 1722, they found the island mostly bare and its inhabitants few.

Today's tourists are numerous, and most visit the place where the stones were obtained to be used for almost all of the island's statues. The ancient inhabitants left the area in a fascinating condition and statues can be seen in all stages of completion.

It's miraculous that Polynesian people ever reached the island in the first place. Getting there today is far easier, but Easter island is still very far afield. Long flights service it from Santiago, Chile and Tahiti. There are flights to Rapa Nui's Airport from Santiago de Chile taking 4 hours and 45 minutes six days a week, and once a week from Papeete in Tahiti taking an hour longer.

High tourist season on the island is January to March -- the Southern Hemisphere summer. Though winter can get a bit chilly, average maximums are still around 22ºC and minimums only drop to 14ºC—so the weather is really rather pleasant year-round.

Cars, motorcycles, and mountain bikes are available for hire and all are good ways for visitors to explore the island. While most people come to explore its cultural history, the island is also home to some excellent diving, surfing, and lovely beaches when a bit of relaxation is in order.

Part 3

I: Let's go back to 1972, when you married Dad. Was it a conscious decision to stay at home or did you work when you got married?

M: I worked at an insurance company. I went to college before I got married. After you were born I went back to school full time. I quit my job because I wanted to go to school.

I: Why didn't you go into the workforce after that?

M: It became complicated. We were in an area where I had no social support and your father's work was taking 200 percent of him, so there was no way I could have balanced children and career. We could make it on one salary. It was also a financial decision.

I: How did you balance domestic responsibilities when Dad came home from work?

M: When you were a baby, your dad took care of you at night so I could study. Later, he did the dishes and I cooked except on weekends. He did laundry on weekends. He did the vacuuming.

I: What did you call yourself? Did you want to give yourself a title like 'domestic engineer'?

M: I called it a homemaker.

I: If you hadn't stayed at home, what would you have done?

M: I wanted to become a doctor, a general practitioner.

I: How did you keep yourself mentally engaged?

M: Trying to steal time to read, like getting up very early Sunday mornings.

I: You and Dad seemed pretty equal. Did you make a conscious decision to model that?

M: We never talked about it. He was determined to make it work, even though his job absorbed most of him. The fact that he lived with his mother before we married was the training for him. And he was a boy scout. Being Haitian, too, you have to know the culture. Haitian women are equal.

I: If a woman today said she would choose to stay at home, what would you say to her?

M: Think very hard. It is a changed world. It's not the same world as it was when I got married 40 years ago. The risks are greater for women now. Divorce is what it is and it's not going to decrease. As women grow more independent, divorce is going to climb because it is easier to make the decision, "I'm done." Also think about your partner, the person you're choosing.

I: The decision starts well before you have children.

M: Absolutely. People change but I don't think values change. Common values keep people together, not differences. Opposites attract? No, you marry your mirror in general.

I: You didn't encourage me to cook or clean or do anything feminine.

M: You were not interested at all. That was fine by me. Your brother was interested so he learned how to cook. It was open for me. I didn't have any rule. Every human being should learn to be independent.

I: Did you ever struggle with being middle class here?

M: Coming to the States was a culture shock in every way. It took me years to recover but eventually I had no difficulty living the life I lead because I know how hard it was for my mother. It's always easier to adjust to better. Nothing was handed to us. We worked harder, longer, to achieve whatever we achieved. This is why also, when the time came, we went back to Haiti to help.

TEST 2

Part 1

You know what would be cool? If we had our own personal mini-helicopters that were almost as easy to fly as cars are to drive. We could take off from our backyards, fly over the traffic and look down at the earthbound masses, moving slowly along below.

As it turns out, the European Union is making plans for that very thing. Six research institutions across Europe are studying the practicality of small commuter helicopters, helped along by a $4.7 million grant from the European government in a project called "MyCopter."

Researchers are trying to figure out how to make personal helicopters easy to fly for ordinary people. They started by collaborating with former military test pilots, and are now testing their flight systems with people who have no flying experience.

MyCopter was proposed in response to a 2007 European Union report. The report, called "Out of the Box: Ideas about the Future of Air Transport", asked researchers for ideas on radical changes to Europe's existing transportation system, including ideas for a "personal air vehicle."

"You have so many man-hours lost sitting in traffic jams, and you have a lot of space above us. Could you use that dimension to ease the road usage that we've got?"

MyCopter is not about designing such a vehicle, but figuring out how it might work. Part of the challenge would be creating a way for masses of airborne cars to fly under airplanes, not to crash into one another, and not to require thousands of new air traffic controllers or physical infrastructure.

Surveys done in Zurich, Switzerland found that people liked the idea of avoiding the traffic jams in the morning and in the evening, but they didn't want the flying cars all day. They wanted to be able to sit on their balconies and enjoy the view without having cars in the air block their view.

The next phase of MyCopter would be to collaborate with private companies on potential designs, but funding has not yet been approved.

Some small companies are already developing flying cars, like Pal-V of the Netherlands, which aims to bring a small car that can turn into a helicopter onto the market by 2016, priced at around $300,000.

Mike Stekelenburg, chief operating officer of Pal-V, said the biggest long-term problem for mass-marketing such vehicles will not be piloting, but environmental issues.

"Automatic pilots have been out there for a long time, and they are already experimenting with the electronics to let cars drive by themselves," he said. "The bigger challenge is getting away from the fossil fuels. You need something renewable that will not increase carbon dioxide emissions."

Part 2

The Prince George's County school system is considering doing away with a policy that prohibits students from using cellphones during the school day. At present, they have the strictest cellphone regulations in the Washington D.C. region. The new policy would allow for some cellphone use in school provided it does not interfere with class work.

The current policy requires that cellphones be turned off and in a student's locker during the school day. It allows phones to be taken away by teachers until the end of the day if a student violates the policy one time. A second violation can lead to school officials taking away the phone and requiring a parent to get it back. A third violation can lead to a student being prohibited from bringing a phone to school for the rest of the school year.

The school board believes that times have changed since it approved the cellphone ban in 2010 and the policy is no longer relevant.

"Four years ago, I didn't even have a smartphone; now middle school students and even some elementary school students have them on campus," a school board member said.

Most school systems in the Washington region have flexible policies, allowing students to carry powered-down cellphones during the school day and turning a blind eye to lunchtime calls. Most take away phones that are used during class.

The proposed policy in Prince George's would allow a teacher to take away a phone that is being used inappropriately during the school day.

If approved by the full board this summer, the new policy would go into effect when schools reopen in August, allowing students to use the devices on school buses, at after-school activities and during the regular school day.

Nancy Williams, who graduated from Central High School last month, said she'd never understood why Prince George's banned cellphones. She added that she had been unable to use her phone during her four years in high school, even in an emergency.

When Prince George's approved its policy in 2010, it was in line with cities such as New York and Detroit, where school leaders were struggling to balance the desires of parents who wanted to be in contact with their children and teachers who were worried that electronic devices may disturb classroom work.

School systems across the country began reexamining cellphone policies after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and mass school shootings. Cellphone bans started to be seen as a safety concern, preventing students from contacting their parents in emergencies.

A survey last year also found that, according to many middle and high school teachers, mobile devices are central to the learning process.

Part 3

I: You were raised traveling around a lot.

M: Yes. Until I was about 10 years old, I lived outside the U.S., moving every year or two. Then we moved to America and still moved around constantly.

I: So where are some of the places you've lived?

M: I was born in Australia, moved to the Dominican Republic, Spain and Mexico. In the States I lived in Texas, Florida, and went to college in Indiana.

I: In your book you talk about getting restless at the year and a half mark whenever you lived anywhere.

M: I wanted to be stimulated in different ways, and I had this idea that I could remake myself in a new place.

I: What was your dad's career like?

M: He worked for Colgate Palmolive, in the marketing department. And actually, he could have stayed in any of those places if he'd wanted to, but he moved around by choice.

I: You were living in New York with your husband when you got this idea.

M: Yes. We loved it, but we'd been there for 3 years, and we were both ready to move on.

I: So you moved to Montana.

M: My family owned some land there. We'd always wanted to build a yurt, and this was a place we could do it.

I: Did you feel the absence of a home base when you were a kid?

M: I always went to international schools, so it felt normal to me. We did come back to the States every summer for a couple of weeks, and visited my cousins who had a rooted lifestyle. A part of me wanted to ride my bike to school or whatever I imagined a more traditional childhood to be, but I was never sad when we moved around.

I: Tell me about building the yurt.

M: We bought a couple of books about building yurts. My husband, who is a furniture designer, sketched it out, and it took three or four months of working pretty much full time to build it.

I: The yurt is barely 200 square feet inside. How do you manage?

M: Well, I wouldn't say it is very spacious, but we also have a log cabin down the way to keep groceries in and shower in.

I: What do you miss about your old life?

M: Community, seeing friends; girlfriends in particular.

I: You've been there for five years. Have you got rid of the desire to keep moving?

M: I've made a deal with my husband that this is our home base, but every five or six years we leave. I don't care where it is, but I hope one of us will go after a really amazing opportunity and we'll just go.

I: Did having a baby change things?

M: Because I was raised the way I was raised, I have this understanding that my daughter can come anywhere with me. She's one year old now; we just did this book tour together.

I: Does your husband have the same desire to travel as you do?

M: We've been together since we were 19. He lived in the same house all through his childhood, but this wasn't something I had to fight for. I didn't have to say, "I'll only marry you if we can do this." What's really lucky is that we can do this because we're both self-employed.

I: What's your next move going to be?

M: My grandparents grew up in Chile, so I have a fantasy of going back there and exploring some family roots. But ultimately, it really comes down to finding the right opportunity.

TEST 3

Part 1

I: In studio with us is Tim Thomerson, one of the stars of 'Sirens'. Welcome to the studio Tim!

T: Thank you.

I: You're in town shooting 'Sirens'. It's a television show that has a second life. It was first on ABC, I think, two years ago.

T: Well, it's three years now. We shot the pilot in Vancouver three years ago, and then thirteen episodes were put on the air on ABC. Then it was cancelled, but a year ago I was approached about doing it again. I was in Thailand at the time doing a spy movie called 'Natural Causes'. I was quite surprised when they called.

I: Unfortunately, we are on radio and not television. I'm sure people out there are saying 'I know that voice and the name sounds familiar', but you're one of those faces that people have seen on literally everything. If there has been an episodic television show in the last twenty years, you've been on it!

T: Yes, I was on 'Starsky & Hutch', on 'Mork & Mindy... all kinds of things.

I: How did you get into acting?

T: After the army I kind of drifted into it. A friend of mine was working as a stage hand at the Shakespeare Festival in San Diego. I just got out of the service, and he said, "I'm working down here and doing this theatre thing. Come and check it out." So I went down there and I watched these guys do OTHELLO and I was really impressed. But getting into theatre was pretty intimidating because of all the words you had to memorize. It was something I just wasn't used to.

I: Did you want to be a big time movie or television star?

T: I really just wanted to work as an actor. I never had visions of being a star.

I: You play a police officer on 'Sirens' called Buddy Zunder. I guess we should describe him for those who haven't seen the show.

T: I'm the old guy with the glasses. The show is about three young female police officers at the Pittsburgh Police Department, and I play one of their training officers.

I: Did you do a lot of research for the part?

T: I got a lot of help from the Pittsburgh Police Department. I did some drive-arounds and I went on a couple of actual chase downs with two cops that I later picked my character from, an Italian guy and a Polish guy. I kind of did a combination.

I: The show's already playing in the United States, and it's doing fantastically.

T: It's in at least 33 different countries.

I: A lot of actors move on to direct. Have you ever thought of going that route yourself?

T: No. I can show up and say a couple of words and then you give me a pay cheque and I'm a happy guy.

I: Would you like to see your son follow in your footsteps and be an actor?

T: I'll let the kid make his own decision on that. The most important thing is get the education and figure out what you want to do.

I: Thank you for being with us today.

T: Thank you.

Part 2

I: You used to be a stage actress. How did you end up being a pilot?

M: My father was in the Royal Air Force so flying is in my blood, I guess. It was only a matter of time.

I: What was your career path to becoming a pilot?

M: It's taken 5 years to save up for all the training costs. During this period I worked for an investment firm while forming my own greeting cards company. I wanted to make sure I had all the funds before I started the training so I could give the course my full attention.

I: Are there any similarities between acting and flying?

M: As an actor you need to be quite thick-skinned and good at taking criticism and learning from it; the same applies when training to be a pilot. Every theatrical performance is different; this sets unexpected challenges. You have to adapt well when under that pressure and remain focused.

I: What's your favourite airport approach?

M: Probably Cedar Key in Florida. It has a short runway, surrounded by smaller islands with lots of water, quite open to all the elements. Not for the faint-hearted in a strong crosswind.

I: What did you learn from your own experiences?

M: Organisation is the key to success. Never leave the ground without fully planning your trip, even if it's just a short flight in your local area.

I: Your philosophy about flying?

M: Enjoy the moment because when it stops you need to move on.

I: Flying seems to suit you.

M: Well, you get the best office view in the world. I don't enjoy a 9 to 5 job so this career gives me the lifestyle I desire. Every day is different with a new challenge. I love travelling, having an adventure and enjoy the solitary environment that the cockpit gives.

I: Who's your aviation hero?

M: I recently watched a documentary that showcased a remarkable band of female pilots who aided the war effort in World War II; a true inspiration.

I: What's in your pilot's bag?

M: I like the iPhone and the iPad and they are becoming very useful tools for pilots. I'm still learning about all the best applications but they certainly help with the planning.

I: Are they what you had with you when you trained?

M: No, I always carried a spare radio.

I: How do you see aviation changing in the next 5 years?

M: I think private charters will start to become more popular. People are tired of all the queues and delays what with travelling now being so affordable and accessible. Time is money; therefore, people want a faster and more efficient route.

I: What advice would you pass on to someone who wants to be a private jet pilot?

M: Motivation and determination are key. You need to work well under pressure, be a good communicator and demonstrate leadership qualities. Most importantly, you must have a passion for flying!

I: If you could fly anywhere today, where would it be?

M: Probably to a remote island. It's been a hectic few years and some peace and quiet would be ideal.

I: One final question: how do you get around when you're not in the air?

M: I have a motorbike, a Ducati Monster.

Part 3

For years, a trip to the shops has been a classic way to cheer you up. The way a purchase can raise the spirits has even come to be known as retail therapy.

But now, consumers are beginning to demand more, a study suggests. Although shopaholics may disagree, the traditional day out at the shops seems to be losing its appeal. People are now spending less of their hard-earned money on high street goods and more on life experiences such as holidays and eating out, according to a study. Just under a third - 32.9 per cent - of consumer spending goes on the retail sector today, a dramatic drop from the figure of 47 per cent in 1980. The study suggests that the leading store chains will have to offer more or face the prospect of empty high streets and shopping malls. There are lots of other things we can spend our money on now compared to ten to 15 years ago and retail is losing out as a result of that. Shops face a challenging future unless they can come up with a more imaginative way to get people back to their stores.

Average incomes are rising, but little of the extra money is being spent on clothing or furniture, indicating that people have become bored with going to the shops, the report says. People seem to be shopping less often and are visiting fewer shops when they do go shopping. Customer loyalty is also falling, despite loyalty cards.

According to an expert, retailers have to win customers back by improving service, their product range and by making shopping more pleasurable. They have to make shopping more of a 'leisure activity' to make people want to go as often as they used to. Failure to do so could have serious consequences, particularly as a company's sales could be growing at a slower rate than costs.

Retail sales are not decreasing, they are not going backwards, but they are growing very slowly, more slowly than it is costing these companies to stay open. With an ageing population, today's typical consumers already have much of what is on offer in shops. They no longer need to shop with the same frequency, and the Internet helps this even further.

A spokesman for the U.K.'s fifth largest shopping centre, Bluewater in Kent, denied that retailers were suffering but acknowledged the need to offer something extra.

'Our year-end figures showed 14 per cent sales growth, which was very good. But Bluewater was designed to be a retail and leisure park and we have rowing on the lakes, a 13-screen cinema and an exhibition from the Natural History Museum to see as well as 320 shops. Our philosophy is to create that type of experience.'

TEST 4

Part 1

I: Tell us about your career.

J: My mother and grandmother encouraged me to use my artistic abilities, and my high school art teacher also inspired me to teach art. After graduating from college, I worked in a museum for a while. This experience really made me a better teacher. I've been teaching at Spring Brook Elementary School for six years now. On average, I see about 140 children a day. I love my job! It continually gives me new things to explore and think about; I'm never bored.

I: What do you enjoy most about your career?

J: One of the most amazing things about being an elementary art teacher is the ability to be a part of a child's life from kindergarten through fifth grade. You see them change and grow. You have a relationship with them, and they keep coming back to see you as they get older.

I: What is your advice to your students when they move on?

J: Never stop learning; be a student of life.

I: What is your favorite project at school?

J: I love doing the art work for the school musicals.

I: Any professional plans for the future?

J: I'd like to get a master's degree, either a master of fine arts or a master's in art education.

I: You studied at North Central College. How did you like it?

J: Because I'm from a small community, I felt very comfortable with the smaller student population at North Central College. I had a one-on-one relationship with my professors, and they were always available to answer my questions. North Central is not one of the top art schools in the U.S., but it was the right school for me. It helped me become a confident artist.

I: Which are the most respected art education schools in your area?

J: Probably the Art Institute of Chicago and Indiana University.

I: Would you change anything about your education if you could?

J: I should have taken advantage of the study abroad program at our school. Because I worked to pay for my own education, I didn't think I could afford it. Looking back, I should have taken out a bit more in student loans and gone abroad for a semester.

I: How is the art education job market?

J: I think that really depends on your geographical location. Bigger cities have better art programs because they have more local taxes to support them. The art programs are usually the first to go when cuts need to be made. I hope people will see the value in the problem solving skills needed in an art-making experience. These lessons give students life skills.

I: What are the best ways to get a job in this field?

J: It helps to know somebody. Ideally, you'd be hired for your great qualities and abilities, but getting your foot in the door is sometimes dependent on who you know inside.

I: What's the most important requirement for your line of work?

J: Being a teacher is a definite lifestyle. You're surrounded by children so you need strong moral values when you take on this career.

Part 2

It's never too late to take up athletics, as Olga Kotelko's example shows. She was 77 when she began serious training. Her first appearance at a World Masters Athletics event in 1999 marked the start of an incredible career in which she earned more than 700 gold medals. She set world records in her age group in events ranging from sprinting to triple jump, long jump to hammer throwing.

The World Masters Athletics events were founded in 1975. They are open to veteran athletes, a category which includes anyone over the age of 35. The championships, which take place every two years, attract up to 10,000 competitors, ranked in five-year age groups.

By her early 90s Olga was the only female of her age still long-jumping and high-jumping competitively at Masters events. Her 100-metre time of less than 24 seconds placed her ahead of many middle-aged men.

Olga Kotelko's extraordinary achievement at such an advanced age attracted scientific interest. Although various medical tests were done on her, including heart checks and brain scans, no one was able to come up with a definitive answer to her secret. Some thought that by only taking up serious sport at the age of 77 she avoided the sort of injuries that force younger athletes to retire. Olga herself believed that her athletic success was due to her determination that enabled her to overcome the challenges of her earlier years.

She was born Olga Shawaga on a farm in Canada in 1919 as the seventh of 11 children of Ukrainian immigrant parents. She and her siblings had to walk more than two miles to school. At home they were expected to help on the farm, milking cows, feeding pigs, and planting vegetables.

Olga worked as a teacher in rural elementary schools and in 1943 married John Kotelko, an insurance salesman with whom she had two daughters. Her husband was a heavy drinker and ten years later she left him and moved in with her sister. She raised her daughters alone, supporting herself by teaching. She never remarried.

In her early years Olga had enjoyed softball, but she did not take up another sport until after her retirement at the age of 65. She tried yoga, aqua fitness and bowling. In 1996 she decided to try athletics. She competed at the World Masters Athletics championship for the first time in Gateshead, England, where she broke two world records and won six gold medals. She kept going until the week before her death. Her last World Masters games were in March in Budapest, where she set nine world records.

Olga's diet included red meat, sauerkraut, cottage cheese and sour milk. She liked to point out that her friend and fellow World Masters star, Ruth Frith, who lived to be 104, avoided vegetables altogether.

Part 3

There is a question I have come to fear, which is: *Can you recommend the perfect bistro*?

The reason it's so hard to give my visiting friends a good answer is that the Paris bistro scene is in full transformation. And the trends are moving in contradictory and worrying directions.

On the one hand, there's a lot of really bad bistro food these days: dishes like onion soup that are mass-produced at large industrial sites, shipped to kitchens and reheated just before serving. If you're not careful, you can end up paying serious money for a meal that was vacuum-packed or frozen just a few hours before.

At the other extreme, there's "bistronomy," a movement among mostly younger chefs who are trying to update the tried-and-true classics using fresh, seasonal ingredients. The interior tends to be modern, the presentation pretty, and the portions smaller. Some bistros have become so trendy that you have to book several weeks in advance at the early hour of 7:30 for a table that must be given up two hours later when the next shift arrives.

None of that for me. Call me old-fashioned, but my idea of the perfect bistro is a place where the dishes are traditional, the ingredients seasonal, the service attentive, the price acceptable and my relationship with the chef close enough that I can visit the kitchen when the meal is over. Julia Child put it best in her book, "My Life in France": "The kind of food I fell in love with," she wrote, "was not trendy, souped-up fantasies, just something very good to eat."

Good bistros are essential to this city and to me. After living here for 12 years, I can report that despite the disturbing changes, the old-style Paris bistro — a place that celebrates honest food and wine, a cozy atmosphere and great conversation — is alive and well.

Ideally, this bistro has a bar with a heavy wood frame where I can sit and have a drink before dinner, and an owner who can always find a table for you.

"I want all my clients to feel like they're coming to my home for dinner," said Sébastien Guénard, the owner and chef of Restaurant Miroir. "I hate to turn people away. I always keep three or four tables free — just in case friends show up. And if they don't, well, imagine the pleasure when a stranger walks in on a Friday night with no reservation and I say, 'Of course I have a table for you!'"

Mr. Guénard is so much a part of the neighborhood that he often stands outside before the dinner rush to hang out with the neighbors. This is the place where the postman can leave a package for someone who's not at home, and where students at the high school down the street can park their skateboards during school hours.

TEST 5

Part 1

Dubai's rise as a modern crossroads connecting East and West is a tale of globalization and ambition, and a brave plan on the future of air travel. Dubai's hometown airline, Emirates, decorates the jerseys of the world's best football teams and it sponsors Formula One car racing.

Dubai used to be just a stopover for travellers who had no desire to stay around in this distant corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and everything has changed. Dubai's airport has overtaken Heathrow in London as the world's busiest international airport. Just a decade ago, Dubai ranked as the 45th-largest international airport.

Now, families from India and European backpackers roam through the airport's terminals, with artificial waterfalls and fake palm trees, duty-free stores and luxury boutiques. Athletes from Iran and tourists from Russia look for their next flight in this cosmopolitan oasis.

With few natural resources and average temperatures exceeding 38 degrees centigrade from May to September, Dubai was taking a risk. But what it lacked in climate it more than made up for in geography. Situated within eight flying hours of two-thirds of the world's population, Dubai has set up a global airport that can connect virtually any two cities in the world with just one stop.

Since the 1980s, when its rulers decided to turn the city into a tourist destination, Dubai's biggest developments include two of the world's largest shopping malls—one with a huge aquarium, another with an indoor ski slope. You find in Dubai the world's tallest tower measuring 828 metres, and artificial palm-shaped islands that can be seen from outer space.

But the cornerstone of the strategy was creating a new airline and building an aviation infrastructure around it to support its growth.

Emirates Airline was set up in 1985 with a $10 million grant from the government of Dubai and a pair of Boeing 727 planes. To attract tourists, Dubai created a month-long shopping festival offering discounts on global brands and cheaper fares and hotel rooms.

A few years ago, the global financial crisis brought Dubai near bankruptcy. But the city has recovered its drive, helped partly by $10 billion from neighbouring Abu Dhabi, and a return of investors from the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Dubai's government planners expect traffic to reach 100 million passengers in 2019, at which point the current airport will reach its maximum capacity. Thus a second airport is planned with five parallel runways. It is expected to cost about $80 billion and should be completed in the middle of the next decade.

Part 2

It is a few days after Christmas in 1989. I am living in New York, working in a dead-end job. It's worse than that; I'm employed by a failing magazine so I probably won't even have my dead-end job for much longer. It's cold, and there are already Christmas trees lying on the pavement. I drop by the apartment of some friends, two guys who live in the West Village. I know they have an English girl visiting. I first see Fiona as she comes out of the kitchen balancing a cup of coffee and a doughnut in her hands. She walks into the room, pauses to light a cigarette, and then looks at me and Tom. We all go out to dinner. Fiona has a bright red coat with a fake fur collar and she swears a lot. She is funny and charming, but also unpredictable, with sudden gestures. She only orders a tossed salad, but keeps picking at my pork chop. But by the end of the evening I very badly want her to be my girlfriend. There are a few minor problems: she lives in London, and I live in New York; I already have a girlfriend of four years' standing and Fiona doesn't seem to like me. Nevertheless, at a New Year's Eve party a few days later, we kiss at midnight. We spend the next day sitting on the floor of my living room with a bottle of Bulgarian wine, watching old black-and-white movies. With the day of Fiona's return flight fast approaching, I have just two weeks to break up with my girlfriend and convince Fiona that she should take me back to England with her. It is a difficult fortnight. I break up with my girlfriend one evening after work, in a bar called the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. I make arrangements about my basement apartment. In the end, Fiona goes back to England without me. I pick up a passport renewal form, get a visa and six weeks later I follow her to London. There hardly seems enough time for us to decide what should happen next. To start with, we do nothing. March, April and May drift by. Finally, in mid-June, we sit down together to discuss the future. So scary is the prospect of a wedding, much less a marriage, that the first option Fiona puts on the table is that we split up and live out the remainder of our lives on separate continents. I have to admit it sounds somewhat less horrible than the prospect of having engagement photos taken. After an hour of debate, we arrive at what seems a dead end.

"So that's it," she says. "We're getting married."

"I suppose," I say.

"Never mind," she says, crossing the kitchen to light a cigarette. "We can always get divorced."

Today we have three children, four pets and a 24-year marriage. Who knew?

Part 3

I: You just got back from an 8-day trip to London. Did you see Kate Middleton?

T: Haha. No! But I never stopped looking.

I: You organized this whole thing pretty quickly, right?

T: I bought the ticket three weeks in advance, for $850, and rented the apartment about 10 minutes after that. Both were pretty easy, and I took about one and a half days off from work.

I: I suppose internet-based work and living in New York make it easier.

T: It would be almost impossible to take these trips without being able to work remotely, that's true. But if I'd only had three days to work with, I would've stayed closer to home but done something probably just as impulsive.

I: How did you choose your apartment?

T: I read in *The New York Times* about East London being cool, so I searched on the Internet, found a neat-looking place and rented it. It was a bit random, but it worked out perfectly.

I: I guess people say mean things about the food in London.

T: Not true. Pretty much everything I had was great. I once found myself at Scott's seafood restaurant with oysters, champagne, and a giant bread basket, and that was pretty amazing. I also had a lamb kebab late one night that was both disgusting and fantastic. I was supposed to have a lot of Indian food, but never did, which is embarrassing.

I: What did you see that you think was special?

T: I loved the National Portrait Gallery! I didn't actually do much culturally, but it was a working vacation, I swear.

I: What did you buy?

T: I bought a ring for £70 at an antique market. The whole experience was really nice, actually. I'd looked at a lot of stuff before finding it in a crowded corner of a glass case. I tried it on, but it didn't fit anywhere except my wedding-ring finger. And the really sweet woman working there was like, "Oh, no, you can't do that!" And I laughed and got it resized and picked it up the next day.

I: How do you feel about broadcasting your vacation?

T: When you're traveling alone, it can be nice to connect with people back home via Tweets, Instagram, etc. But before I send a Tweet, I try to think about whether I'm doing it to bring people some amusement, or if it's an attempt to show off. Because if I'm like "check out this amazing view from the plane," it's also like "I'm on a plane, isn't that fantastic, where am I going, aren't I mysterious? Please think I'm fantastic and mysterious!"

I: What was your happiest moment on the trip?

T: At one point I accidentally fell asleep after doing some work, and woke up thinking I could keep sleeping if I wanted to, or do anything…or nothing.

I: What made you the most angry on the trip ?

T: When I couldn't figure out how to use the washing machine in the apartment.

TEST 6

Part 1

I: The Swedish city of Gothenburg will conduct an experiment to determine whether a six-hour work day is better than an eight-hour one. One group of government workers will work six hours a day, while another will continue working eight hours. Mats Pilhem, a local politician who supports the scheme, is here with me to answer questions about the proposal.

What benefits do you expect to see?

M: The goal is a healthier and happier staff; this will have a positive effect on the elderly as well. Another goal is to create new jobs. This is also a feminist question; this reform releases time for all working people. A shorter workday means that female part-timers will be translated into full-time jobs.

I: Other Swedish towns have experimented with six-hour work days – Kiruna, for example – and gone back to regular hours. Why would this time be different?

M: Kiruna's project showed good results. But it was too expensive for the city, the economic savings, e.g. from reduced sick leaves, went to the government – not back to Kiruna. It also lacked a proper evaluation of the results. We will run this 12-month project together with researchers to help interpret the results.

I: There are different ideas around for reducing work hours, e.g. a lot of people in Holland work four-day weeks. Why is a six-hour work day better than a shorter working week or more vacation time?

M: Any kind of reduction of working hours is good. The framework of our project is a 30-hour working week – and, for most, a six-hour work day. But it is flexible. The night staff e.g. will probably work fewer nights. For physically demanding jobs, it is more important to work six hours. We don't think that more vacation time will give the same effects, as the aim is to improve our staff's everyday life as well.

I: What will happen if the experiment proves that a six-hour work day is better?

M: We hope to extend the project, but for six hours to become the working norm, it requires a decision on a national level. Regarding the private sector, the Toyota service centre has had six-hour work days since 2002 and they have increased their profit.

I: I live in America, where there's a culture of working long hours. People don't like it, but they feel it is a reason the U.S. is so economically powerful. What is different in Sweden?

M: The economy grew stronger when the work day was reduced to eight hours; I do not think we will endanger the economy this time either. The workers will also be given the same amount of pay as if they worked eight hours. I think it's possible to have a high working morale, and still value things other than work as well.

Part 2

I: What made you decide to run across the U.S.?

Z: I was already running a lot, and I thought if I could be outside all the time, just moving on my own two feet, then that would be complete happiness for me.

I: How many miles were you averaging a day across the U.S.?

Z: When I started, it was about 25 miles a day, but when I finished, it was closer to 35.

I: What did you carry with you?

Z: People always asked about my pushchair, "Is there a baby in that thing?" No baby; I carried clothes, a first aid kit, a phone and energy bars, among other things.

I: What did you bring for your Tour run?

Z: I brought a lot of the same stuff, but this time I didn't have to be as careful how I packed because my friend Alex, who was filming a documentary, was following me in a van.

I: You've said that running the Tour was more demanding than running across the U.S.

Z: The Tour organizers have had 100 years to make it as difficult as possible! If there was a mountain nearby, then the Tour route went over it. If there were two routes around the back of a mountain, we always went the longer way. Looking at the maps and seeing that it *could* be much easier if it went *this* way instead of *that* way—that was much more mentally frustrating than actually doing it.

I: Do people tell you that running like this is going to ruin your health?

Z: Yeah. The week before I left for France I was really nervous because I had pain in my foot I'd never had before. I had, like, five doctor's appointments and some said they supported my decision to run, but the others told me it was the stupidest thing I could do.

I: Has all this running brought on any physical changes?

Z: I felt like I was taller after my cross-country run, and when I was measured, I saw that I was a full inch and a half taller.

I: What are your eating habits like for these long runs?

Z: For the first couple of weeks, I'm hungry all the time. But then my body adjusts and by the end of the run, I eat more or less like I normally do. People would assume I needed to eat 7,000 calories a day, but I didn't. I drank coffee in the morning. I ate a lot of fresh fruit. In France I mostly had bread and cheese and tuna because that's what we could afford.

I: What did you gain from these runs?

Z: At some point the runs stopped being about just running: it was about the people I stayed with, seeing the towns I ran through, and learning as much as possible. I found that when you're doing something like this, and you're staying with strangers, they're often moved to share their stories with you.

I: Do you have a philosophy on running?

Z: Running is a means of discovery. You're discovering what you're made of physically and mentally. You're discovering the town or the mountains where you're running. And you're discovering who you are and how you feel about your world. I relive so many memories and experiences in my mind while I run. To me, running's more of a moving meditation than a competitive endeavor.

Part 3

My 1921 copy of the book 'Holidays in Tents' begins with the author acknowledging that there is nothing he can write that will convince people to go camping unless they have the desire to do so. What was true in 1921 probably remains so nearly a century later, but things have moved on a bit since then. Camping today is more popular than ever; it has also been proven that those who camp are happier, have closer family relationships, are healthier, less stressed and are more socially connected. Over 1.5 million people in the United Kingdom choose to holiday in a field each year, helping to contribute £6 billion to the country's economy.

Some of its charm lies in the fact that camping has a tendency to reinvent itself, to offer new experiences, new tent designs and equipment, which bring comfort and convenience to the modern camper.

The latest craze for "pop-up campsites" – or temporary campsites, often open for just a weekend – is something a little different from traditional campsites. Landowners and innovative camping entrepreneurs are able to take advantage of the "28-day rule", which allows temporary campsites to operate without planning permission. Pop-up campsites are often focused around a specific activity such as storytelling or even gourmet meals.

'Camp in My Garden' is another new experience in the camping world, used frequently by international backpackers. 'Camp in My Garden' provides the chance to pitch your tent in someone's garden. With over 8,000 registered hosts and guests, and sites from Belgium to Brazil, this phenomenon enables travellers to spend a few nights in private gardens or small and unusual campsites, for little or no cost.

The word "glamping" comes from 'glamorous camping', and it involves accommodation and facilities that are more luxurious than those associated with traditional camping. Camping huts of all shapes and sizes offer comfort and warmth without the need to pack a tent, often in spectacular locations and at competitive prices. The advantage of staying in a place where comfort is laid on is that you can leave your car behind and arrive by public transport.

Brooks Guesthouse in Bristol brings glamping to the city. When there's no room at the inn, you can stay in one of the hotel's caravans up on the roof, with all the comfort you'd expect from a glamping experience.

Fancy a glamping vacation in Scotland? Take a Harvest Moon Holiday and stay in a treehouse on the coast, 20 miles from Edinburgh. It's an ideal location to explore the area while staying in alternative accommodation.

TEST 7

Part 1

I: You're really into '60s fashion and you have a strong image - how do you think that affects the way people see your cooking?

S: I think people look at me and see a traditional British girl... a girl who likes to cook traditional British food - regional wherever possible. I would like to think that people look at me as someone who might not be the greatest cook in the world but can feed the family and can show everyday working class people how to provide for the family and to make the ingredients go a little bit further.

I: You were approached last year by two local businessmen to expand a bakery and create 'The Beehive Bakery' as a national brand. How was that experience?

S: It was overwhelming. I went from making cakes on my kitchen table part-time to employing staff and running a business. It's been a lot of hard work but I'm really enjoying it. I haven't had a day off since Christmas day!

I: Your recipes range from traditional hearty British recipes to cakes and puddings. As The Beehive Bakery expands, do you think you'll stick with the traditional British recipes?

S: Definitely. But I can also cook French and Italian food, and now I've got a Pakistani family so I can cook Pakistani food as well. I do make a good curry! I'm self-taught. I've read books on all different kinds of food, but my style and what I would like to be known for, is my traditional British regional dishes.

I: Who would you say have been your biggest influences along the way?

S: My Grandma Jane; she wasn't great, but she was inspirational. Jamie Oliver was the first chef I really got into; I've read all his books. I like chefs like Mark Hix who don't want to do anything fancy, just use great ingredients to create food they ate when they were growing up.

I: You've set up a cookery school in the North East. How is that going?

S: Really well. The good thing about the school is that it's very informal and friendly.. If you make a mistake, we'll laugh about it and start again. It's a proper girls' afternoon out and the guys love it too. We have cookies, we chat about our cooking disasters, and we do a lot of cooking. It's a fun experience.

I: Tell me three things on your must-do-next-list.

S: After finishing my own series on TV, I would like to get my cookbook published. Then I would like to do more charity work.

I: What advice do you have for young aspiring chefs trying to fulfil their dream?

S: I would say go for it 100 per cent, don't look back and learn everything you can. If you can't afford a book, get it from the library, if you can't afford to eat out at restaurants, get on the internet and Google restaurant menus and try to re-create them at home. These are all the things I did when I was growing up. Make sure that you're enjoying it -- that's the most important thing.

Part 2

A conference supporting education in developing countries has been held in Brussels. The international gathering of political leaders, aid organizations and United Nations representatives has raised almost 21 billion euros. The United Kingdom has increased its contribution to the Global Partnership for Education, whose aim is to get all children into school for a quality education in the world's poorest countries. The European Union doubled its funding, but the biggest increase has been in promises in increased spending from developing countries. Funds were also added from private donors, such as the Hewlett Foundation, and the promise of support in the form of training from Microsoft.

The United Kingdom currently remains the biggest single donor government. Former donors such as Spain have said that, due to their own financial problems, they will have to delay contributions. Donations are linked to promises from the governments of developing countries to increase their spending on education.

Figures published by UNESCO on Thursday showed that there are still 58 million children without any access to schools - and that progress has slowed down considerably in the past few years. But the fact that developing countries are willing to increase their spending on education shows a significant change in attitude. It is also to the long-term advantage of Western governments to increase spending as this will generate growth and expand markets.

The international community had set a millennium goal that all children around the world would have access to a primary education by 2015. But the updated figures show this target is likely to be missed.

UNESCO's figures also indicate that there have been improvements in several countries, including Morocco and Nepal, but overall there has been little progress since 2007. There are still more than 30 million children in sub-Saharan Africa without any education. Most of these children will never start school and those who do are at risk of dropping out.

There are reports of successful projects, including cash transfers for poor families in Nicaragua to cover school costs. Ghana has doubled education spending and almost doubled school enrolment since the beginning of the century. Vietnam has been praised for improving the quality as well as the availability of education. These countries have very different circumstances but they all share the political will to bring about real change in education.

Part 3

Second language professionals are often asked about the best method for learning a language. Some say: language by partner is the best way, meaning, go to the country and fall in love with someone who speaks only the language you want to learn and not yours. What we all recommend is, however, that people make the most of motivation, which is essential for language learning. Although not everyone who is motivated to learn manages to succeed, most people who achieve a high level of success also turn out to be very strongly motivated.

According to research, there are motivators within some learners. These learners might want to learn a language to a higher level so that they can understand their grandparents who live in another country. Or they might want to teach their children a second language so that they have the advantages of being bilingual.

There are also outside sources of motivation, such as a student needing to pass a test in order to satisfy a language requirement. In practice, people tend to have a variety of reasons for why they want to learn, and different aspects motivate them at different times.

According to researchers, some learners are motivated to learn a language because they want to get to know people who speak that language, and they are often also interested in the culture associated with the language.

Instrumental motivation is at work when people primarily want to learn a language for practical reasons, such as a higher salary or getting into university. These practical reasons, however, have been shown to be less powerful in language learning success.

Of course, people's motivation can change. A learner's motivation levels can go up or down depending on how interested, or involved their conversational partners are -- these might be native speakers, or fellow learners and their teacher in the classroom. In other words, motivation can be catching.

Motivation can also be influenced by how interesting or engaging the task is that learners are undertaking. Professor Deborah Tannen says that wanting to have certain kinds of conversations, with people one knows or wants to know, can be a huge motivator in learning a new language. She follows this up with a personal example. Although her first husband, who was Greek, spoke English fluently, Tannen had to learn Greek in order to communicate with his mother, whom she came to love deeply.

What about learners who are strongly motivated to learn a language but still don't succeed? Some of us just don't have a natural talent for language learning, but we may be good at science, art or music. Researchers traditionally look at the relationships among different kinds of talents and language learning outcomes. More recent approaches have started to study exceptionally successful second language learners to understand their particular skills.

TEST 8

Part 1

I: Please introduce yourself.

C: My name is Carolyn Guild. I currently spend summers and falls in California, and then move up into the mountains above Salt Lake City during the winter and spring.

I: How did you get interested in photography?

C: My father always had a camera around his neck, and encouraged me to take pictures by giving me cameras to use whenever I'd leave home. Then later in life when I started traveling with my husband Whitney, the breathtaking beauty led me back to photography.

I: Do you have an artistic background?

C: Other than my father's early encouragement, no. I grew up riding horses and going to school. Horses were my passion and my life. I competed riding jumpers, and trained race horses.

I: Which photographer inspired your art?

C: I love studying the history of photography and the early photographers. Minor White has fascinated me since I was introduced to his work. Two of my favorite contemporary photographers are Michael Levin and Michael Kenna.

I: How much preparation do you put into taking a photograph?

C: If I'm doing night photography, a lot of planning goes into it: when will the moon be up and where, what size is the moon, focusing and composing before dark, etc. Other times, I like to spend time in a given area, and try to feel an emotional response to what I see. Occasionally, I'll be driving down the road, stop, get out the gear, and make a photograph purely spontaneously.

I: You seem to be fascinated by landscapes and places that are absolutely out of this world. What inspires you about these places?

C: The wild parts of our world can inspire a spiritual feeling. As Minor White said, "Be still with yourself until the object of your intention recognizes you. Then don't leave until you have captured its essence."

I: We can see your works mostly in black and white; why have you chosen to present them in this form?

C: I think this says it best: "To see in colour is delightful to the eye, but to see in black and white delights the soul. No colour to attract or distract. Only the lines, the shadows and highlights; lines, light and shapes repeated." Personally, I find black and white photography a more sensual medium.

I: Do you ever feel creatively unmotivated?

C: I sometimes go through periods when I lack motivation. A good camping trip generally solves that.

I: What do you do in your life besides photography?

C: Horses were my life for more than 40 years. Then I met my husband, got into rock climbing, snowboarding, surfing, and mountaineering. And now it's come full circle; I'm headed to Wyoming at the end of July to buy a ranch horse!

I: What are your future plans?

C: I've started photographing horses and wild horses. I'd like to continue that. And one day I truly want to visit the coastlines of Scotland and Ireland.

Part 2

Johann Westhauser, a 52-year-old physicist, was struck in the head by a rock more than 1,000 metres below the surface in Germany's deepest cave. He had only one wish as he was finally lifted to the surface on Thursday— to thank the hundreds of people responsible for his rescue.

An experienced cave explorer, Mr. Westhauser was no stranger to the complete darkness of the cavern that he, as part of a team, had discovered in the mid-1990s. Called the 'Big Thing', the cave stretches more than 12 miles near the Austrian border, not far from where Adolf Hitler had his alpine residence. It is known among even the most experienced cavers as challenging.

Despite wearing his helmet, Mr. Westhauser was injured in the deepest part of the cave while exploring with two others. One of them made the half-day journey back to the surface to alert the authorities.

The top priority of the rescue effort was ensuring that Mr. Westhauser was stable. He was wrapped in protective clothes and strapped in a toboggan like those used to take injured skiers off the mountain. Then began the slow process of pulling the toboggan up from the depths, and carrying it through passages so narrow that Mr. Westhauser's nose was nearly touching the stone walls.

"You had to be not only experienced in climbing, but able to raise yourself on ropes attached to the walls," said Christian Lüthi, a caver from Switzerland. "It is difficult for the best trained individual, but to maneuver the narrow passages with a patient tied to a toboggan involved careful planning."

The complexity of the rescue effort was evident from the start. The rocky surface of the mountain where the cavern's narrow mouth opens at first made it impossible for a helicopter to land. Supplies and equipment had to be lowered by cable until a landing area for the helicopter could be cleared.

Within days, rescue workers began arriving from Austria, Croatia, Italy and Switzerland. Many were cavers themselves, a group of expert climbers who regularly explore the caves of the Alps. By the end, 202 workers had descended into the cave to carry out the rescue effort. Although immobilized, Mr. Westhauser had one hand free that he used to guide the toboggan through narrow passages.

After 11 days, 10 hours and 40 minutes, Mr. Westhauser emerged, and the toboggan was transferred hand to hand to a waiting helicopter that took him to a hospital.

"Our patient has been admitted to the clinic; we have achieved our goal," the head of the Mountain Rescue Service told reporters at a news conference held in the fire station of a nearby town. "We have also made rescue history, which was only possible through international cooperation."

Part 3

Want the taste of farm fresh eggs but not the bother of building a hen house? A young couple in Maryland have come up with a solution called Rent-a-Coop. Customers can rent two egg-laying hens or watch the miracle of birth with the chick hatching program and then return them after a month or two.

Tyler Phillips stands in the back of his parents' home in Potomac and surveys his booming chicken empire. Lined up in front of him are the three hen houses he was up building until midnight. His white van is ready to go. The hens are already inside their house he is delivering to a customer a 10-minute drive away.

Since Phillips, who is 26, and his girlfriend Diana built their first hen house 2½ years ago, demand for rental chickens has grown so rapidly that they can hardly build enough hen houses to fill their orders. As of June, their business, Rent-a-Coop, had 70 hen houses and chick incubators out on loan. About a third of their customers end up buying the hens, house and all.

"What people don't realize in the beginning is that hens have a lot of personality," says Phillips, a tall redhead who used to work for his mother. "When it's time for the chickens to go back to the farm, the families are no longer saying goodbye to a chicken. They are saying goodbye to a pet and friend."

The DiPaola family have had their hen house for only a couple of weeks, but the youngest of their four children, 7-year-old Emily, has already fallen in love with one of the hens. Her mother had to tell her daughter, "No, you cannot sleep with the chicken."

Renting the chickens and their house for four weeks is costing the family $160. Another $125 buys another four weeks—already a certainty at this point for the DiPaola family. That money can be used toward the $600 price of buying the hens, the house, watering dish and other essentials.

42-year-old Lara DiPaola is more comfortable around chickens than many Rent-a-Coop customers. She grew up collecting eggs before school as a child in rural California, but she never thought of them as pets.

"My parents are making endless jokes about the fact that I rent chickens. They laugh so hard we can't have a conversation."

The popularity of chicken-renting businesses has grown dramatically recently. Similar businesses have been started in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Alabama.

Large companies have not entered the chicken-rental business, which remains a mostly in-family phenomenon.

TEST 9

Part 1

I: We loved following you during London 2012. How are you feeling now?

V: Relieved it's all over. I would've retired after the Beijing Olympics, but obviously having a home games meant that I had to continue. But now I am done. I'm looking forward to new challenges.

I: What was the first thing you did once it was all over?

V: Cried! I just cried a lot and made everyone else cry, unfortunately. I said that I was going to give up crying for sure after the Olympics.

I: How heavy is a gold medal?

V: 450 grams. We weighed it, because I was like, 'It's really heavy!' So we weighed it on the scales. We were quite disappointed because we thought it felt heavier. We were like, 'Oh, it must weigh at least a kilo.' We were dreaming - it's only 450 grams exactly.

I: You have probably been taking it easy since the end of the Games.

V: Actually, I haven't really had a chance to take it easy. To be honest, after you've crossed the line at the Olympic Games it is really crazy for the next, about, five or six hours. Media, press conference, dope control; you might get some food if you're lucky. You might see family if you're lucky. I'm really looking forward to just getting home and relaxing. I'm just looking forward to doing nice things really. Definitely we'll go shopping because I haven't been allowed to walk around that much. So, really, I haven't been shopping in ages. I'm looking forward to buying some girly clothes rather than living in a tracksuit. Although, you know, it's been really nice to wear the Olympic kit, I'm looking forward to wearing non-sports, feminine clothes.

I: Will you be getting married soon?

V: Next year, I think. I don't think we could get round to sorting it any sooner than that. I want it in the summer, in August. Someone said I should have it on the same day as I won the gold medal next year. Maybe!

I: Is there any food you've been looking forward to indulging in post Games?

V: Well, actually I feel really strongly about giving up meat. I think I might eat seafood but not meat. I love sushi; I couldn't give that up. I've been bullied into eating on so many occasions by coaches. My coach once came in and had a go at me because I was suggesting that I might have cereal for lunch because I was feeling quite nervous and everything tasted like cardboard. And he sort of had a go at me and said go and eat something. Then he dragged me to the dining hall with him so he could watch me eat! I'm definitely not into this anymore; I'm not into being forced to eat. I have been pushed to put on weight. They have wanted me to be heavier and have more muscle. Now I'm looking forward to eating within my time frame, when I feel like it. I'm also looking forward to never having to have a protein shake ever again. None of that fake food, I want real food!

Part 2

Nearly two-thirds of the population of the United Kingdom is overweight or obese. Fat, not thin, is today's norm. But studies show that we don't notice it because it has happened gradually and we have got used to seeing people who are overweight. Kids in pictures taken on the beach in the 1950s, with ribs showing, look too thin to modern eyes. They are of normal weight. A quarter of us are actually seriously overweight.

Men are fatter than women: 67% of men and 57% of women are overweight in the UK. Poorer areas tend to have higher rates of people who are overweight, but no income group is immune. There is a community effect: you are more likely to be overweight if your friends and neighbours are and you see it as the norm.

The U.K. government spends £14m a year on its anti-obesity social marketing programme Change4Life. The food industry spends more than £1bn a year on marketing in the UK. Big Food is watching you. Technology has allowed its scientists to track shoppers' eye movements, to see which supermarket shelves we look at – and which keep our attention. We are not as in control of our shopping as we like to believe. We go in with good intentions, but we come out with large bottles of soft drinks and packets of biscuits.

Snacking is "a newly created behaviour". It was practically unknown before the Second World War. It is now a big cause of obesity and considered a major growth sector for the food and drink industry. A recently published study has shown that American children are eating almost continuously, with three snacks a day as well as their ordinary meals.

Those who think children are getting fat because they sit in front of the television too much may be wrong. Inactivity does not lead to obesity – obesity leads to inactivity. Overweight children feel less like running about.

The food industry and the politicians who support the industry say there is no such thing as bad food. There is an element of truth in that. One chocolate bar won't in itself do you any harm. Daily sweet snacks, washed down with sugary drinks and supplemented with potato chips before a meal of cheeseburger with chips, however, are highly likely to cause serious health problems.

Hunger is in the mind. Your brain, not your stomach, tells you when to stop eating. When we eat in front of the television or while looking at our computer screen at work, we are not giving lunch or dinner our full attention. Our brain is not registering how much we have eaten and we may well feel we haven't had enough. Scientists are working on a phone application so that people can take pictures of their meals and snacks as a reminder that they've actually had enough to eat.

Part 3

I: Fredric, what were you like as a kid?

F: I wasn't actually interested in archaeology. Most people think that you're born to be an archaeologist. And I like to think that anybody who's played in a sandbox is a future archaeologist. My own interests were different. I went to school to be an artist. I drew everything, and this is how I got my first job working on an archaeological excavation where I was drawing pictures of the different objects. And I became really interested in the story behind these objects. So slowly I became more interested in the ancient things than drawing, but I still do all the drawings on my own digs.

I: Do you have a hero?

F: I think it's important for everybody to have a hero. Mine is Raphael Pumpelly, a geologist. The first time I went to central Asia, I went to Turkmenistan, a desert country in the heart of Asia. It was just at the end of the Soviet Union and I thought, "Here I am, probably the first American to be here." And in the capital I met an old man who said, "You're from America? You're not the first American to be in Turkmenistan. There was this guy 100 years ago who was here." And that was Raphael Pumpelly.

I: Could you say a few words about your family?

F: I have two boys; they both like to play soccer. And they have been on archaeological digs with me and my wife, who is in the same line of work. They're not really that interested in archaeology—I guess if you've grown up with it, it doesn't seem all that exotic. But they really love seeing us at work.

I: Where have you taken them?

F: They've been to South America, to Lake Titicaca and to the high areas of the Andes. Unfortunately for them, it was winter on the other side of the equator, so they spent their summer vacation brushing off snow and breaking the film of ice that was on all the water.

I: What's your favourite story?

F: This happened some 20 years ago when I was excavating a site on the coast of Egypt, one of the driest coasts in the whole world. Nothing grows there, there's no water, there're no trees. The reason people had built a town at this particular site was that it's a great trading place, a place where ships would come in. And it's so dry that everything's preserved. So when we excavated there, we found the house of a trader who had been on the coast waiting for ships to come in. He had storehouses, and there were remains of many of the things that came in and left through his storehouses. There was a doormat in front of the house that was still preserved. This was about a 700-year-old doormat. We were done with our excavations; I had done drawings of the house, and we had photographed it. And I thought "Gee, it would be a shame to leave this doormat here on the ground." So I pulled it up, and then we made a really interesting discovery. Under the mat was the key of the house that the merchant had left 700 years ago, thinking he would return one day. And here we found this key. And it even had his name written on it.

TEST 10

Part 1

For about 250 years, from the mid-16th to the late 18th century, a little town on the banks of the river Po was a music-making capital. It was the birthplace not only of Antonio Stradivari, still the most famous master violin maker, but probably also of the modern violin itself. A series of craftsmen living there made some of the most beautiful-sounding violins in the world.

To this day Cremona, a small town of northern Italian elegance, remains a centre of musical excellence, with around 200 violin-makers crafting new instruments for some of the world's most demanding customers. In 2013, after years of waiting, a new museum featuring some of the finest violins ever made opened its doors.

Such is the value of one instrument, a Stradivarius from 1715, that when it was transported across town to the new museum, it was accompanied by a police convoy while traffic was blocked.

The Violin Museum, the total cost of which is thought to be around €10m, is largely the product of one person, Giovanni Arvedi, a local industrialist and arts patron. Not satisfied with owning the local football club, he decided in 2009 to fund the construction of a place that would show off the town's musical glories, past and present.

With the support of the local government and other sponsors, a disused arts centre in the heart of the town was renovated and transformed into the museum, with a complex of rooms housing priceless violins. One of these is a 1566 model designed by Andrea Amati, who is widely considered to be the inventor of the modern violin.

The museum has merged several collections in Cremona and displays historic pieces alongside more recent examples of great craftsmanship. Visitors are able to watch a real-life violin-maker at work in an on-site studio and, if they're lucky, catch a concert in a 460-seat auditorium.

The focus and content of the museum make it unique. There are beautiful collections of Cremona violins around the world–in London, for example, at the Royal Academy of Music, but nothing of this kind. Most of these collections are located in more general museums so they're lost among the huge amount of things that these museums exhibit. In the museum in Cremona, a lot of effort was put into describing the history behind violin-making–how the violin came to life in the 16th century and how it developed through the centuries.

Though Giovanni Arvedi, the driving force behind the museum, does not play the violin or collect them, his love of the musical instrument made the museum a reality.

Part 2

Not many people can say they've travelled to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or better known as North Korea. The secretive Communist nation is estimated to receive around two to three thousand tourists a year, and it is only possible to fly into it from Russia and China. But Simon Cockerell has been there 135 times.

The 36-year–old Brit has lived in Beijing, China since 2000. He initially found work there as a teacher, writer of marketing reports and acting in small roles on television. In 2002, he went on his first trip to North Korea at the invitation of Nick Bonner, a fellow Brit, whom he met through an amateur football league.

Mr Bonner established his company, the Beijing-based Koryo Tours, in 1993. The company offers guided tours to North Korea to individuals and groups based around specific interests including architecture, sport, and Korean history. It also promotes football friendship matches, school exchanges and cultural exchanges – such as taking the film 'Bend It Like Beckham' to the Pyongyang film festival.

Mr Cockerell says he was excited to go and see something that he had read about but of which he knew very little. He liked what he saw. He found the scenery in the mountains amazing, and he also enjoyed visiting Pyongyang and other cities. He ended up joining Koryo tours as general manager, and now visits North Korea 12 to 15 times a year, sometimes for weeks on end, through his work.

While tourism is heavily regulated in North Korea, other tour providers exist in addition to Koryo. Another company based in China specializes in budget tours to North Korea. Koryo tours' customers are about 25 per cent American, 20 per cent British and the rest are from Western and Northern Europe. They also get a lot of tourists from Asia. Much of their clientele are professionals in their mid-30s, but they also get students who decide just to go. The motivation for most people that travel to North Korea seems to be to experience a very different culture and they want to see as much as they can with their own eyes.

Though the U.S. Department of State recommends against all travel by U.S. citizens to North Korea, most visits to the country are trouble-free. On its website, Koryo Tours claims that North Korea is one of the safest destinations to visit as a tourist.

As someone with so much first-hand experience of the country, Mr Cockerell is in demand whenever the media seek comment on North Korean issues, with appearances on BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera and Sky News.

Critics might suggest that sending tours to North Korea helps provide the country with foreign currency while it is under international sanctions due to its nuclear programme. But Mr Cockerell argues that it is engagement on a human level. North Korea is not just the government -- there are, after all, over 24 million people living there.

Part 3

I: Vilmos Zsigmond is widely regarded as one of the most influential cinematographers. Known for such classic 1970s films as "The Deer Hunter", he has a new movie coming out on June 21. 'Compulsion' is a psychological thriller about two women who live next door to each other.

What was your inspiration?

V: We shot it the way we used to make movies in Hollywood and Europe. And mostly I would think about the '50s and '60s.

I: How did you work with director Egidio Coccimiglio?

V: Really well. The first time we got together, he flew to California and we talked about how the movie should look. The films we like were almost identical, movies of Polanski, Bergman, Antonioni, Hitchcock, mostly black-and-white photography.

I: I wanted to ask you whether you borrowed from Hitchcock when you shot 'Compulsion'.

V: Absolutely, I did. Hitchcock was making these kinds of movies, and I learned a lot from him. I thought a lot about that revolution in the movies, that thrilling kind of storytelling. And I learned a lot from Woody Allen because I did three movies with him.

I: Sections of the film are separated by city images that are edited really fast. Does fast editing change the way you shoot?

V: Yes, actually it does. In modern editing, which basically borrows a lot from music videos, they go on for three seconds and there's a cut and another cut and another cut. But I don't think good storytelling is done with fast cuts. And also, I hate hand-held shots.

I: You learned about lighting in part from Dutch painters. What did you learn from them?

V: Those were really the early cinematographers. Many times it was so dark in the studio that they had to use candles and all kinds of artificial light and they became masters of lighting their paintings.

I: When you first came to the U.S., you used the first name 'William'. When did you become comfortable using your Hungarian name?

V: I didn't care much what my name was, but Peter Fonda became a director and he hired me for his first movie, entitled 'The Hired Hand', in 1971. And he said, "You don't look like a William. You have a Hungarian accent. What was your name in Hungary?" "Well, it was Vilmos." "What a beautiful name," he said. And he gave me my first credit in the movies as Vilmos Zsigmond.

I: You still teach a two-week seminar in Hungary every two years?

V: Yes, I do that and we also started a new school in Los Angeles called the Global Cinematography Institute. We are trying to teach the new digital cinematographers to go back and watch old classics. And I try to teach lighting, because they start forgetting that digital photography has to be lit as well. I like to be the bridge between old times and new times.