

Jonathan Livingston would want you to know...

By JILLIAN WIESE
CAPITAL TIMES STAFF WRITER

What do you think of when you think of a mall? Perhaps you think of shopping, clothes, the fast food or even the coolest place to hang out when you were in junior high school. What about seagulls? Do they come to mind when you think of a mall? What about parking lots? If you see seagulls hanging out in places that have large parking lots, then this is a problem that you can help fix.

Seagulls are part of the *Larinae* family that contains over 40 species in the family. Gulls are native to shorelines around the world, although you won't necessarily find seagulls in tropical regions. The color of their legs and bills helps distinguish gulls from one another. The reason these birds are found in places like garbage dumps and large parking lots is because they scavengers. They will eat insects, mollusk and crustaceans on the beaches. Sometimes they will fly inland to a plowed field looking for worms. They will also eat fish and garbage from ships along the shore.

According to Stew McKinney Jr. at askexperts.com, there are a few different reasons why you will find seagulls in parking lots:

- 1) He says that two of the most common gulls, the herring and ring-billed gulls, have become a lazy species. They have become almost completely dependent on the dumped waste of humans for their survival. Places like a mall or fast food restaurant commonly have larger parking lots that contain a lot of trash deposited by humans.
- 2) McKinney also mentions that there is overcrowding of the gulls' habitat. People enjoy living by the ocean, and they build houses there, reducing the gulls' natural habitat. This leaves the gulls no choice but to head inland to find food.
- 3) Parking lots provide a ready supply of the small amount of grit which birds need to help them digest their food.
- 4) Just as we enjoy the warm sand underneath our feet, gulls also enjoy the warmth. A parking lot's asphalt surface reflects the sun's heat, making it very warm.
- 5) Bad weather like thunderstorms or hurricanes force the gulls inland. McKinney suggests that gulls can feel the barometric changes preceding storms in the air.

I enjoy seeing a seagull now and then because it reminds me of the beach, but now that I know the reasons why they are here, it isn't so nice anymore. If you are interested in helping the seagulls, all you need to do is start putting your trash in a trash can where it belongs. We can't have seagulls becoming totally dependent on humans. This takes away from the natural instincts with which they were born.



Now that's dedication

The award for traveling the greatest distance to receive an award goes to Ivana Takacova who came to PSH from Presov in the Slovak Republic to attend the ceremony on April 29.

Takacova received the Sue Samuelson Award for Academic Excellence in American Studies for being an outstanding student during her time at PSH. She received her master's degree in American Studies last December.

Dr. Simon Bronner said Takacova's thesis on Andy Warhol, "is a brilliant study of the artist's work against the backdrop of post-World War II cultural developments."

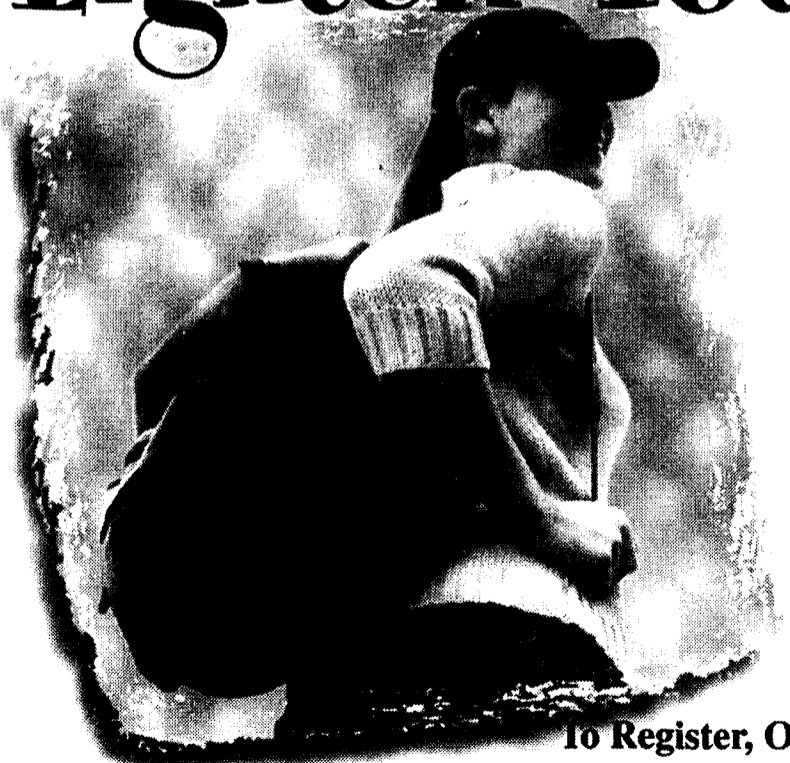
In addition to the Samuelson award, Takacova earned the Doris Hughes Award for her service as an international student while at PSH.

Takacova has been an assistant lecturer in the department of British and American studies at Presov University since 1997 and earned a master's degree in English language and literature at the Institute of Higher Education in Bolton, England.

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— Treaty of Tripoli (1797) signed by John Adams

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