

IPRO 363: This week's Language Link

By **Nattasha Viñas**
TECHNEWS WRITER



(Photo courtesy Nattasha Viñas)

Carmen is from Madrid, Spain, and we'd like you to meet her.

What's your name? Carmen Bravo

Where are you originally from? Madrid, Spain

What is your major and what year are you at IIT? M.S. in Biomedical Engineering, 1st Year

What's your native language? Spanish

Do you speak any languages other than your native language and English? No

Can you tell us how to say a few common phrases in your native language?

Do you want to dance with me? ¿Quieres bailar conmigo?

That boy is really cute! Ese chico es guapísimo (Está bueno – slang).

Can I have your phone number? ¿Me das tu número de teléfono?

Are there any specific customs or traditions relating to your culture that you'd like

to share? On New Year's Eve, we finish the year by eating twelve grapes at midnight, one grape for each stroke of the clock. If you finish eating the grapes on time, you will have twelve months of good luck.

What brought you to join us here in Chicago, and why did you choose IIT? I wanted to come to the United States to study, and IIT was one of the schools that had an exchange program at my university. I can develop my interest in the biomedical field here.

Do you like it here? Yeah.

What's your favorite way to stay in touch with your culture when you're here in Chicago? I hang out with other Spanish students and listen to Spanish music when I'm homesick.

What Chicago experience has been most fun or interesting to you so far? I loved kayaking on the Chicago River while watching the fireworks, going to school sponsored events like watching the musicals Wicked and the Lion King, and living with two beautiful American girls. :-)

Interview conducted by Nattasha Viñas of IPRO 363. Looking to find someone to learn a new language with? Keep your eyes open for Language Link next semester, pioneered by IPRO 363. Email ipro363@googlegroups.com for more information, but here's a general round-up:

Language Link is a new IPRO that's building a website for IIT that can work to match up students according to their language learning needs, as they hope to be part of IIT's up-and-coming foreign language program. The website will work sort of like a dating site - using a matching algorithm to match up people according to various factors, such as language proficiency, classes, extracurricular interests, and languages of interest.

Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour inspires students

By **Harshita Iyer**
TECHNEWS WRITER

"A key to becoming a successful entrepreneur is knowing how to find and take advantage of opportunities." It is with this aim that the Knapp Entrepreneurship Center is organizing the Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour at IIT on the 6th of April from 3 - 7 p.m.

Through this workshop students will have the opportunity to learn a time-tested formula for recognizing and solving problems, creating profitable business opportunities that solve those problems, and evaluating their validity in the marketplace, while getting to interact with people who have already made it big in the field. Whether or not they currently have an idea, this workshop will show students how to distinguish between just an 'idea' and a potentially profit-making business opportunity.

The moderator at the event, Bert Gervais (a.k.a. "The Mentor Guy"), is a nationally bestselling author of the book "Who's in Your Top Hive? - Your Guide to Finding Your Success Mentors," speaker, and award-winning entrepreneur. He has appeared in USA Today, Fox News, Inc.com, and Young Money Magazine, spoken in over 30 cities across the United States, and presented alongside the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as the National Chamber of Commerce and count-

less associations. His first company garnered many awards including the Entrepreneurs Organization's "East Coast Student Entrepreneur of the Year" Award for 2006 & 2007. The book "Millennial Leaders" by Bea Fields profiles Bert as one of the top Gen Y leaders in the country. What's remarkable is that he has accomplished all of this before his 25th birthday.

Aimed at inspiring students to come up with bigger ideas, this will also help polish the ones they already have. There will be speaker sessions, interspersed with action sessions and networking sessions, where the students will get to interact and network with other people attending the event. This event is sure to create new ideas among all those who attend, as it will allow students to expand their knowledge of the business world, and also their knowledge of what works and what doesn't.

This program is not something that anybody who wants to be an entrepreneur would want to miss out on. This is great for audiences who are interested in starting a business, but don't know where to start and may need more of a direction. So if you're an entrepreneur just waiting to break free and become the next big thing, this is probably the place for you. You can register for this event at Extremetour.org.

The Metra is here

By **Harshita Iyer**
TECHNEWS WRITER

After an almost 15 year long wait, the Metra has come to IIT! As one of the more anticipated additions to the IIT campus, the new 35th Street/ 'Lou' Jones Metra stop is expected to have a strong impact on people commuting to the IIT campus, as well as De LaSalle, the Police Headquarters, the Fire Department Headquarters, the US Cellular Field, and Park Boulevard, the big housing development underway on 35th Street. This is a big step forward for IIT, as well as the surrounding area. The construction of the Metra stop is part of a strategy to transform this part of Chicago into a great place to live, study, and work. A dramatic increase in commercial and retail organizations in the area is expected to occur following the completion of the project.

But where did all this start? The first recorded idea for a Metra stop at 33rd and La Salle was in 1989, and it was to connect to the CTA Red Line. After Vice Provost of External Affairs David Baker came to hear about this in 1998 from Peter Beltemacchi (from the Department of Architecture at IIT), he started working with Congressman Rush to make it a reality. In 2002, Congress included the construction of the Metra stop in its 6-year Transportation Reauthorization Plan, but it wasn't until 2004 that it was passed, and \$4.1 million were allotted to the construction of the Metra station. The design work started around 2004-2005, but took three years to complete, and it was found that the cost would be \$12 million. The project once again seemed lost, until 2009. According to Baker, the ARRA (American Reinvestment and Recovery Act) of 2009 was the reason that this project was finally completed. "When President Obama got Congress to agree to ARRA the project was already 'shovel-ready,' and so it received a special \$7 million commitment from the government, thus fueling the project once again," says Baker. Once this was done, Baker, Congressman Rush and Metra started work on getting the permit from the City, which took until 2010. Finally construction began in the Spring of 2010 and



Photo courtesy Utsav Gandhi

the station was expected to be completed by December of 2010, but was later postponed to Spring 2011, due to a workers' strike, and winter delays.

The name of the Metra stop is 35th Street/ 'Lou' Jones, a name given by Congressman Rush in the memory and honor of Louvanna Jones, a State Representative serving a district east of IIT, who was renowned for her support to the less fortunate people in the community. In Baker's words, "The ['Lou' Jones Metra] station is an important gift to the community from Congressman Rush." And indeed, the construction of the station is expected to benefit everyone around the area. This stop is also part of the Transit Oriented Development plan, which is a planning term for finding ways to promote economic development around transit stops (for example, the completion of the station will bring more

people to US Cellular Field). As far as IIT is concerned, the Metra stop is expected to bring in a lot more commuters, part-time students, and faculty. As the Executive Director of the Technology Park (located right across from the Metra station), Baker sees this as a huge advantage, as it will encourage people to come to IIT, for school as well as work.

Although the construction of the Metra stop was initially seen as something that would support mainly the White Sox, the project eventually, in terms of pushing for its completion, shifted more toward IIT. And as a symbol of its support and involvement, IIT gave a "permanent easement" of its land for the stop to be built over it, which means that the land was handed over for free, as long as there was a Metra station to be developed on it.

Another interesting fact that connects the station with IIT is the fact that the benches in

front of the station are made from the bricks from a 'Mies Wall' on campus, which implies that it is the very same brick that Mies van der Rohe himself selected for IIT. Even the unusual and dramatic style of construction of the station (using a ramp instead of an elevator) makes one wonder if it is reminiscent of IIT's own "unusual" architecture.

As for the future, Baker hopes that Federal Street, which has always been a somewhat unused part of campus, will become a lot more active. In anticipation of this, there are plans to open the Tech Building "Incubator" right across from the station, to bring life back to that part of campus. The completion of station is eagerly anticipated across campus, and once it is opened on April 3 and dedicated on May 6, it will surely become an integral part of campus life.