



TRI-COUNTY LITERACY VOLUNTEERS

Helping Hands

Spring 2006

www.tricountyliteracy.org

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Member Agency of United Way
of Mid-Coast Maine



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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR - Judy Dillon

Dear Friends,

Letter writing may soon be a lost art as we seek to communicate more and more by e-mail. Yet, yesterday, during an LV Maine meeting, the audience re-connected with the subject of writing letters and I wanted to share some of the insights from Mike Brady, the presenter. He said that we can learn much from the letters such as the culture in which the author lived. They are also a bridge to history and also help to unlock the majesty of people. We talked about some of the famous letters from Emily Dickenson which were written during the Civil War to those contained in the book about baseball in *The Last Days of Summer*. Letters may be a tool for tutors to use to expand the thoughts of the learners or to help them compose their thoughts when writing letters to a friend, a child or grandchild. It is amazing how letters are saved, how many people have pen pals or how many letters from great statesmen have been preserved for our benefit. Could they be a bridge to your written history?

LV Maine has been working in our behalf with new universal brochures which you may have already seen, TV and radio announcements, and a health curriculum which should be ready for our use by next fall. Sometimes we forget that we are a part of a larger organization and yet we are very grateful for their support, especially as we start the accreditation process.

-Judy



Membership Update

Hello Everyone!

We've had some interesting discussions recently about the term "membership," and thought it was time for both clarification and change.

In previous years, a "member" was someone who paid a fee of \$10 for the current year. Our "year" is our fiscal year, which runs from July 1st to June 30th. Beginning this fiscal year (starting July 1, 2006), membership criteria is being defined differently. The definition of membership is as follows: "Anyone who gives \$1.00 or more during the fiscal year is considered a member and will be included on our membership list. Every member is entitled to receive the organization's newsletters and is entitled to one vote at the annual meeting."

In April, you will be receiving a membership/donation letter asking for your financial contribution for Tri-County Literacy's upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007). Please send your check to:

Tri-County Literacy
2 Sheridan Road
Bath, ME 04530

Please note that if you have not already contributed for the fiscal year that ends June 30th and would still like to do so, it is not too late!

-Membership Committee

By One of Our Learners

Kathy Kenyon's learner, Mary Storer, went out to dinner on her birthday and told Kathy her story. Kathy wrote it down as Mary was telling it to her.

New Year's Day was my birthday. It was a cold day. My boyfriend, Sonny, and I took a taxi to Brackett's market and walked over to Kennebec Tavern. They sat us down and gave us a menu. I asked for the seafood menu so I could order lobster and he had haddock. We sat by the window and watched the ice float by. Then I asked the waitress if I could keep the menu for a little longer so I could practice reading it. Sonny said I was doing better than I was before. I was happy having dinner with Sonny. This is the first time I got dressed up and went out to a place like Kennebec Tavern with Sonny and I had a really good time.

-Mary Storer

TCLV PROGRAM COORDINATOR UPDATE

Is that spring that I hear with the birds chirping or is it just mud season that will be with us for awhile?

NEW VOLUNTEERS: Either way, we are moving right along into spring with new volunteers and new ideas for you all. We have eight wonderful new tutors who are trained. I attended my first training which was very informative. Hats off to Molly Hahn and her training crew for ALL the work that they do (including the delicious cookies and food that Harriet Gray provided). It was a pleasure to spend time with our new tutors and I hope that they will enjoy their time volunteering with our organization. Welcome to Ray Burgess, Claudia Beckwith, Lynne Sparrow, Lyn Detwiler, Barbara Thompson, Red Mulligan, Christina Oddleifson and Suzanne Reeb.

NEW WEBSITE: Note that we have a wonderful new website that one of our volunteers has worked very hard on. Hats off to J. Collins for an incredible job in using his creativity skills and computer skills to bring us up to date. You can view the website at www.tricountyliteracy.org. I will put information on this website that I think you may all be interested in so check it on a regular basis for new updates.

ONLINE TRAINING: For those of you who are interested in learning more on how to tutor, tools to use, ideas for lesson plans and even specific lesson plans, I would like you to be aware of a wonderful website called the Verizon Literacy Campus. It was developed and is managed by the National Center for Family Literacy and ProLiteracy Worldwide, with generous funding from Verizon Communications. The website has online courses that

you can take to learn about...anything! I have sampled many of them and I am impressed with how thorough they are. In addition, it connects you to resources such as REEP (Arlington Education and Employment Program), which is a curriculum for adult ESL students put together by the Arlington, VA school district. Arlington has one of the best curriculums in the country (not only because I have friends who put this together), because they have years of experience with this issue. Arlington spent lots of money and time focusing on their ESL population, therefore their knowledge and experience is being sought throughout the country. Please take a look at this website: www.literacycampus.org and see how these courses may help you with your teaching.

NEWS FOR YOU: This is a reminder that we have the NEWS FOR YOU newspapers in our libraries for you to use with your students. They are a wonderful resource for learners who want to know the news, but are unable to read the newspaper because the reading level is too difficult, and it is fun to read the paper and then do the crossword puzzles with your learner.

IN-SERVICES: Stay tuned for the next in-service which will be offered near you (we hope) and will focus on goal attainment between the learner and the tutor.

SCRABBLE®: The next Scrabble® Challenge will be held on Saturday, April 29th at Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. This fundraiser is lots of fun for all so grab a friend (or not) and join in the fun. Log on to our website, www.tricountyliteracy.org or call our office for more information.

-Emmy Kapler



Group Learning for Adults

Several years ago, after recognizing the inherent difficulties that both developmentally disabled (DD) individuals and volunteer tutors encounter in typical one-to-one tutoring environments, Literacy Volunteers experimented with the concept of group sessions led by multiple tutors. Our original classes were well received and flourished. As a result of student interest and area needs, we now offer 3 DD reading groups in the mid-coast region (in cooperation with Independence Association, Mobius and Elmhust). We've also created a "Fun With Words" program for homeless individuals at the Tedford Shelter in Brunswick.

All of these ventures utilize a rather non-traditional approach to the improvement of one's reading and writing skills. We have often used the term "stealth learning" when trying to describe or characterize our efforts. By mixing a variety of word games and stories with humor, spontaneity and respect, our classes tend to be interesting, engaging and enjoyable. We are able to educate students and improve their literacy skills simply as a by-product of the fun we're having in the classroom.

Over time, we have seen very positive outcomes from our work. A learner's vocabulary routinely gets better, as does their spelling and their understanding of both sentence structure and the

confusing quirks of the English language. This consistently has translated into improved reading comprehension and clearer communication of thoughts to others (either written or verbal). We have seen learners experience job promotions or expanded employment responsibilities due to their improved literacy skills.

Learner interests also seem to expand. Students can be seen visiting local libraries, buying written and/or audio books, and trying to read the daily newspaper. Some students have even become interested in pursuing the traditional one-to-one tutoring method in addition to their classroom activity.

Another important outcome of our programs involves a learner's personality. We have seen students develop more confidence in their own abilities, display more patience with people, and offer both encouragement and assistance to others in class. In general, they just seem happier.

Overall, we feel our focus on the DD and homeless populations in the mid-coast area has resulted in a mutually rewarding experience for all involved.

-Steve Williams

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER will be held on June 8th at the Curtis Memorial Library, 23 Pleasant St., Brunswick. Norbert Twichell will be entertaining us with his stories and Yankee humor.

RWM PROGRAM COORDINATOR UPDATE

Adult education directors have been visiting Read With Me sessions during the past few months. Participants hear about the free GED and adult basic education classes, and other offerings at the various programs in the tri-county area. Through the generosity of the Four Rivers Consortium, we are able to offer 20% off vouchers toward adult education courses to RWM participants. Many thanks to the adult education directors in our area for their support, specifically to Giselle Cinquars, Bath Adult Education/Bailey Evening School, Ellen Dickens, Union 74 Adult and Community Education, Diana McCain, Merrymeeting Regional Adult Education, Pam Moody, Wiscasset Community Education, Bob Paskal, Boothbay Region Adult and Community Education, Deb Randall, Union 132/133 Adult and Community Education, and Susan Taylor, MSAD #40 Adult Education.

During these sessions, we include information about the services provided by the Department of Labor Career Centers, and Tri-County Literacy's one-on-one tutoring. Even though people might not sign up for these services immediately, phone calls I've received even months later indicate that our connection with these resources is helpful and important.

Read With Me site coordinators have also arranged library

visits for each of their sites. Because the Head Start Centers draw people from many communities, it can be difficult to find a "free" library card for all of our participants. Libraries are helping in many ways, including providing cards for out-of-town families while children are enrolled in Head Start, or providing "scholarships" for families who would otherwise not be eligible for cards. Because there are so many sites in Bath, we hosted a library party this year for all Bath RWM families. Our thanks to Liane Chapman, Gibbs Library, Sara Gallant, Waldoboro Public Library, Kate McGowen, Topsham Public Library, Mary Pinkham, Boothbay Harbor Memorial Library, Linda Roberts, Curtis Memorial Library, David Schumacher, Skidompha Library, Joan Spurgat, Wiscasset Public Library, and Nyree Thomas, Patten Free Library.

It's hard to believe that we are nearing the end of this year's sessions at our sites. We had to cut back Head Start sessions from twelve to six at each place, and have found it difficult to accomplish all we do in six meetings. If you'd like to know more about what we do at a session, please take a look at the newly revised Tri-County Literacy website, www.tricountyliteracy.org. Thank you, J. Collins, for all your work on this project.

-Carolyn Hall

Scrabble® Tournament News

Tri-County Literacy will hold their 5th **Play and Share for Literacy Scrabble® Challenge** on Saturday, April 29th in the Morrell Community Room at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. The event helps promote a greater awareness of the need to improve literacy in our communities and is an important fundraiser for the programs and services offered by Tri-County Literacy.

This Scrabble® Challenge, like its predecessors, promises to be a lot of fun. Players will come in all sizes, shapes, backgrounds and skill levels. They will compete as teams of two to four people in four 25-minute Scrabble® games. And players will dream of placing letters on squares representing triple-word score or double-letter score, snack and schmooze with each other between games, fill the room with laughter and have an all-around good time. Trophies will again be awarded to each member of the winning team. A special trophy will be given to the individual who raises the most money. Other “Scrabblers” will receive prizes, too.

Last Fall, we had ten Scrabble® teams scrutinize their letter racks and game boards to determine their best possible words, highest scoring plays and cleverest defensive tactics. Could it be that words like *ovoid*, *huger*, *zowie*, *wo*, and *fe* really existed? Joe Brennan and Terry McPhetres, members of the consistently outstanding Damariscotta Devils team, were recognized as the

winners of the Scrabble® Challenge. Joe was also rewarded as the individual bringing in the most pledge money. Michael Ferdico, our youngest player and U.S. National Yo-Yo champ in the 12 to 14-year-old bracket, achieved “oohs” and “aahs” by entertaining us with his incredible and breathtaking tricks during the breaks.

Please remember that while early registration is encouraged for planning purposes, walk-ins on game day are very welcome. Registration at the door will begin at 12:30 pm with game play starting shortly after 1:00 pm. All festivities should end no later than 4:00 pm. Registration is \$10 per person and everyone has the opportunity to raise money for literacy by collecting pledges. Hope to see you on April 29th!

For more information and to register your team (or just yourself), please contact us. You may call our offices at 443-6384 or toll free at 877-885-7441. You can email us at literacyvolunteers@tricountyliteracy.org. Or, you could visit our newly renovated website at www.tricountyliteracy.org.

The Organizing Committee wants to thank, in advance, all participants and everyone donating ideas, time, money, prizes or food to this event. Your efforts help make the Scrabble® Challenge a successful, appealing, engaging and pleasurable venture.

-Steve Williams

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

HAPPY SPRING!

Spring is fast approaching! The warming weather and the arrival of birds and flowers always rejuvenates me!

The staff and volunteers of Tri-County Literacy have been working so hard in the past months, and both (adult and family literacy) programs are busy, busy, busy!

We have two exciting bits of information to pass along about grants and contributions.

First ~ Thank You to “The First”

In February, The First branch in Wiscasset held one of a series of dress down days, with bank employees contributing to a community giving fund for the privilege of dressing casually that day. Tri-County Literacy was the lucky recipient of that day’s event!

I had the opportunity to go to Wiscasset and meet a number of bank employees and receive their check for \$393.86. Earlier in the month we received a shipment of books for Read With Me and a large order of training books for our newest Literacy Volunteers

tutors. The generous donation from The First went a long way toward meeting the cost of those books. Thank you!

National Book Scholarship Fund Award

Back in December we submitted an application to ProLiteracy Worldwide for a book grant from their National Book Scholarship Fund (NBSF). The purpose of the NBSF is to provide local literacy programs throughout the United States with books from New Readers Press to support their literacy initiatives.

We are very happy to report that we will be receiving over 300 New Readers Press books from the NBSF, valued at \$3,364.65! These books will be used in the Literacy Volunteers (adult) program.

Tri-County Literacy is grateful for this grant, which will allow us to further stretch our financial resources as we continue to meet basic literacy and ESL needs in the Mid Coast area.

-Darlene Marciniak



The State of Adult Literacy in the U.S.

A Summary of NAAL Results by Barbara S. Collins

The latest National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) estimates that 14% of adults, or 30 million people have below basic literacy. That equates to roughly one in six adults who read or write at a barely functional level.

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy was given to 19,000 adults across the United States in 2003. A stratified, validated sample of the population over 16 years of age was selected so that the results can be extrapolated to reflect the general adult population. The test measured skills using printed and written information to function at work and in the community. Three types of literacy were measured: 1) prose reading made up of sentences and paragraphs (i.e. newspaper articles), 2) documents not organized in sentences (i.e. bills, schedules, prescription labels), and 3) quantitative activities requiring simple calculations using numbers found in written materials (i.e. tax forms, bank statements). The five levels are:

- **Proficient** - able to do complex activities such as comparing viewpoints in two editorials or interpreting a table about blood pressure and physical activity
- **Intermediate** - able to do moderately challenging tasks such a calculating the cost of an order from an office supply catalog or read and understand articles about different political systems.
- **Basic** - can perform everyday tasks such as comparing the ticket price of two sporting events or understanding a pamphlet that describes how a person is selected for jury duty.
- **Below basic** - unable to perform the above tasks.
- **Non-literate in English** - not able to be tested

The estimated numbers of adults over 16 in the U.S. based on the prose literacy score in the following levels:

Proficient	28 million
Intermediate	95 million
Basic	63 million
Below basic	30 million
Non-literate in Eng.	11 million

In order to understand the state of adult literacy, NAAL builds on the previous national assessment of literacy in 1992. The NAAL results, released in December 2005, showed that the average quantitative literacy scores of adults increased eight points between 1992 and 2003, although average prose and document literacy did not differ significantly. The break-down of score results by state and county have not yet been released.

Analysis of adults tested based on their educational level suggests, overall, that the more education adults had, the higher their prose literacy. Document and quantitative literacy showed the same pattern. However, looking only at the prose scores, adults who did not graduate from high school were in the Below Basic level. The average prose score of adults who ended their education after obtaining a GED or graduating from high school was at the top of the Basic level. The average prose score of adults with any post-secondary education fell into the Intermediate category. 41% of adults with graduate education had Proficient prose literacy.

The Workforce Investment Act (1998) defines literacy as “ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society.” As in 1992, the recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy finds an association between the level of literacy, employment and earnings. At each increasing level of prose literacy, more adults were employed full time. Median weekly earnings also increase with each level of literacy.

In releasing this report, Mark Schneider, of the National Center for Education Statistics said, “Measuring literacy in adults is a complicated task.” The NAAL addressed the challenges of finding a representative sample of adults to test and measuring different types of literacy. He says the report “gives us solid data on the state of adult literacy in America.”

Want more information? See National Assessment of Adult Literacy - <http://nces.ed.gov/>.

Spring Tutor Training

We are so pleased to announce that seven more trainees have completed the training and are matched with a learner or are helping with one of our groups. The names of the new trainees are: Lyn Detweiler, Claudia Beckwith, Ray Burgess, Christina Oddleifson, Barbara Thompson, Suzanne Reeb, Lynn Sparrow and Leonard “Red” Mulligan, and we welcome them to Tri-County Literacy. The Topsham Library hosted our 18 hour training with excellent space and needed equipment. Pam Moody was a new member of the training team along with Barb White and Molly Hahn. If anyone is interested in being part of the training team, please phone or e-mail Emmy Kapler.

-Molly Hahn



Tri-County Literacy Volunteers
2 Sheridan Road
Bath, ME 04530

DATES TO REMEMBER

The next Board meeting:

Tuesday, May 9, 2006

All board meetings are held in the Children's Reading Room in the Patten Free Library in Bath, from 6-8 p.m. and they are open to all Tri-County Literacy Volunteer members.

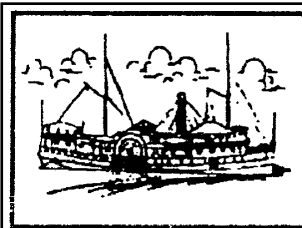
Tri-County Literacy Volunteers **(207) 443-6384 • (877) 885-7441**

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Literacy Volunteers: literacyvolunteers@tricountyliteracy.org
Read With Me Program: readwithme@tricountyliteracy.org
www.tricountyliteracy.org

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Scrabble® Tournament - April 29, 2006 in the Morrell Community Room at the Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick

Annual Meeting - June 8, 2006 in the Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick.



A special thanks to the community spirit of the folks at Gardiner Savings Institution, FSB who have funded the production, printing and mailing of this newsletter to benefit all LVA adult learners and volunteers.

GARDINER SAVINGS INSTITUTION, FSB

Tri-County Literacy Volunteers MISSION STATEMENT

Tri-County Literacy Volunteers, believes that the ability to read and write is critical to personal freedom and the maintenance of a democratic society. The mission of Tri-County Literacy Volunteers, therefore, is to promote increased literacy for adult learners through the effective use of volunteers, the provision of support services for volunteers and learners, and collaboration with individuals, groups, or organizations desiring to foster increased literacy.

As such, Tri-County Literacy Volunteers is committed to:
Enabling adults and families in need of basic literacy skills to achieve their potential through one-to-one or small group instruction.

Training, supervising, and supporting Tri-County Literacy Volunteers volunteer tutors and learners.

Strengthening and improving the organization's capacity to provide literacy instructions and services to the community.