

# From the Back of the Boat

*Bob Garfinkel*

2009, like other years, had its ups and downs. If you throw in the poor economy, we had perhaps more lows than highs. As far as Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County is concerned, our wonderful tutors kept eager students on their toes and challenged. Our first student studied for and passed the US Citizenship Test and three more students have jumped on board with at least two students expected to pass the test in 2010.

2009 had our first state-wide essay winner and hopefully all of our students will be winners this year (see article, "Let's Write!" in this issue). I want to thank everyone reading this newsletter (tutors, board members and donors) for your help supporting an organization that has changed peoples' lives and has given many a second chance.

On the down-side, due to the economy, available donation sources have dried up. Several foundations have told me that donation requests were up 30-37% over last year. If anyone has any fundraising ideas, please call me.

A second disappointment for us was our tutor recruitment promotion in 2009. After certifying a record twelve tutors in the fall of 2008, we fell short in attracting new tutors despite upping our promotion effort by at least one-third. The few tutors we did train were excellent. Most of the literacy councils around the state also had smaller new tutor classes. It is the economy? Have we run out of friends and acquaintances to interest in our cause? Is it lack of time or apathy? I don't know. What I do know is if we really believe that what we are doing is important, we need all of us to talk to potential tutors and let them know when and where our next orientation is. Dates are in the calendar section of this newsletter. Thanks for your help.

## THE STAR

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### News at a glance:

Successful Recognition Day  
Calendar – Workshops  
Training  
Cultural event

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### From the Tutor's Point of View

Dorothy Weedman was gracious enough to put her Christmas plans aside and help us out with several ideas that her student has been working on. Thank you Dorothy!

We set aside our workbooks and readers to concentrate on writing and conversation. My student responded very favorably to both.

My student wrote a simple biography that included his birth, parents, brothers, sisters, school, coming to the US, his first job and coming to Wisconsin. He also wrote wonderful details about his job and caring for cows. He seemed to enjoy sharing with us and we learned so much about him.

As Christmas drew near, I asked my student to write a Christmas menu that his family would have in Mexico. He started hesitantly, I think because his mother and sister did the cooking. Then he poured out more information about the Mexican holiday cooking and customs when he saw that we were interested and really wanted to know about it. His menu included homemade tamales, enchiladas, posole, tortillas, pastries, fruit salad, and potatoes. He was proud of his heritage and we were proud of him.

# Introducing Our Tutor of the Season

Sister Lorraine, School Sister of St. Francis, tutor

“Life is a gift to be received gratefully and to be shared freely.”  
This quote from Lorraine sums up a lot about her life.



Born on the fringes of Milwaukee, she grew up knowing that being a sister would help her share her life freely. Her first teaching assignment was a combined class of 60 second and third graders. After a couple years, she was invited to teach at a new high school in Chicago. Here she taught many different subjects from Latin and Biology to Social studies. During this time, in summers she earned a Master degree in sociology at the University of Notre Dame. Her next leap was to the college scene. Here she taught social science and supervised student teachers. She also had the opportunity to travel with a Fulbright Scholarship, to study African cultures. This took her around the world to a dozen or so countries.

Always involved and interested in spirituality, she spent a year in a study program at the Institute for Spiritual Leadership, and then began her retreat work. She moved to Baileys Harbor, and established St. Joseph Retreat on Kangaroo Lake. She worked there for 30 years before moving to Casco.

A gift is to be received gratefully and to be shared freely. The question—How is the gift to be shared in Casco? It didn't take long to discover that there was an urgent need for literacy in the area. A teacher from Milwaukee was invited to give a workshop for several people, providing materials and methods of teaching English as a second language. Shortly after beginning to teach, a notice appeared in the church bulletin announcing a training session for Literacy Partners of Kewaunee. She attended the training and began using the Laubach program.

Her first student continues to study with Lorraine. As Lorraine says, “I am teaching her English, but she is teaching me so much of her culture. The stereotypes we hear so often are clearly shattered by this hard working, single mother, who has never missed a class, always comes prepared, and struggles with living in a foreign country.”

## 2010 Calendar

|  |                    |  |
|--|--------------------|--|
| February 15  | 6:30 pm            | NWTC Luxemburg                                       |
| <b>Conversation and Pronunciation Workshop</b> (Please RSVP by February 8) |                    |  |
| March 2  | 9:00 am – 10:00 am | Hillcrest School, Kewaunee (921 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.) |
| <b>Tutor Orientation</b>   |                    |  |
| March 9  | 9:00 am – 12:30 am | Hillcrest School, Kewaunee                           |
| <b>Tutor Training Class #1</b>   |                    |  |
| March 16   | 9:00 am – 12:30 am | Hillcrest School, Kewaunee                           |
| <b>Tutor Training Class #2</b>   |                    |  |
| March 18   | 9:00 am – 12:30 am | Hillcrest School, Kewaunee                           |
| <b>Tutor Training Class #3</b>   |                    |  |
| March 23   | 9:00 am – 12:30 am | Hillcrest School, Kewaunee                           |
| <b>Tutor Training Class #4</b>   |                    |  |

## 2010 Calendar (Continued)

April 15                      6:30 pm                      Kewaunee Grade School  
**Free Cultural Event – Bi-Okoto (African)**

April (TBA)  
**Learning Styles**

May 18                      8:00 am – 2:30 pm                      UWGB  
**Health Literacy Conference**

## Notes from the Calendar

### Conversation and Pronunciation Workshop

Shawn Jensen will lead a Conversation and Pronunciation workshop for our tutors and interested board members on February 15, 2010 at 6:30 pm at NWTC in Luxemburg. The workshop is designed to help us “spice up” our conversation sessions with our students. Shawn will also point out pronunciation errors specific to Hispanics and how to correct those errors.

Shawn is an ELL (English Language Learner) instructor at NWTC and a Workforce Development coordinator for Literacy, Green Bay where she teaches ELL and Spanish in the workplace.

If you would like to attend this workshop, please call Bob 845-2516 or email [rgarfinkel@centurytel.net](mailto:rgarfinkel@centurytel.net) by February 8<sup>th</sup> to insure that we have enough room and handouts for all in attendance.

### Tutor Orientation and Training

We need your help to promote tutor training. In the past, we have tried an orientation video tape on cable TV, cable notices, newspaper articles, church bulletins, signs, and presentations to organizations. Far and away, our best source of recruiting new tutors is our tutors talking to their friends, relatives, and neighbors. We need your help again. We have recently had two very small tutor classes and will start feeling the loss of tutors due to health problems, retirement, relocation or other reasons. We presently have over 12 students on a waiting list for tutors. If you believe that what you are doing is important, please help us promote our cause and make a few calls. Please have potential tutors call Bob.

### Cultural Event

Bi-Okoto (African) is our next cultural event that will take place on April 15<sup>th</sup> at the Kewaunee Grade School. The event is free and should be outstanding. More details will be in the next edition of this newsletter. Mark your calendars.

### Learning Styles Workshop

Understanding how we learn and individual learning differences can maximize your efforts and make learning much easier and enjoyable for your student. The date is yet to be determined. More information will be in the next edition of the “Star.”

### Health Literacy Conference

UWGB will host a Health Literacy Conference on May 18<sup>th</sup>. This conference will provide us with the information we need to help us help our students navigate through the health care system. Details will be in the March issue.

## Let's Write

Last June, an essay of one of our students was selected as one of the winners in a state-wide writing contest. Along with others, he was honored at a banquet in Milwaukee, given a beautiful certificate, a pocket dictionary, a great meal, plus his essay was published in a beautiful book called, "The Fabric of Life." This book can be found in both of our fine public libraries. All of these events spurred a lot of interest among some of our students to a point that they have started writing an essay for the 2010 contest! Unfortunately, the contest has been canceled for at least the next two years due to the economy. Let's use this as an opportunity, not a road block. Instead of a contest, how about putting together a booklet of writings from all of our students, and hand them out at Recognition Day 2010! Students could write about anything they want. Length can be only a few sentences or several pages. Other literacy councils have done this with students as low as level 1 and were very successful. Each essay should have a title and the students have a choice of adding their name or not. Students may enter as many items as they want.

Writing reinforces reading skills and all of our students can benefit from this experience. Tutors should help the student proof read each item before submitting. Writing can be e-mailed to [rgarfinkel@centurytel.net](mailto:rgarfinkel@centurytel.net) or mailed to our PO Box. Entries must be mailed by August 29, 2010. If a tutor is not sure how to start this exciting project, please call Bob.

Some of our students have excellent artistic ability. We need several illustrations to brighten up our book. Pictures can be about anything. A one or two sentence caption about the picture (at the bottom) would make the picture more meaningful. Once again, the artist can decide whether or not to sign the picture. Pictures will be duplicated in black and white. Again, the deadline is August 29, 2010.

All essay submissions will be published. If we receive more illustrations than we need, our committee will make the selection.

The hardest part of this project is to get started. If this goes well, perhaps next year we can choose a theme, professionally bind the book and put it in every library in the area.

## Of This and That.....

--- Our Health Literacy Committee is busy working on a health directory, listing contacts, especially low cost, no-cost medical help. The committee's third meeting will be in Mid-January

--- Thank you so much to Kewaunee Fabrications, Wisconsin Public Service, BayLake Bank, Paul Hoagland and Karen Hoffman Hoagland, and Richard and Chris Hanneman for supporting Literacy Partners with generous donations.

--- Congratulations to Barb Baldwin, Lorraine Aspenleiter, Kate Phillips, Meg Naysmith, Mary Gotstein. Mary Browne and their students for finishing a level in Laubach!

--- The website has been updated with a huge addition to the "Links" section called, "Helpful Websites."

--- Tutors interested in getting together for sharing common concerns and successes (sharing sessions), call Bob at 845-2516

--- The materials list for our Resource Center has been updated online and at Hillcrest. New items include: "Spelling for the Spanish Speaker"

"English Grammar Step by Step"  
"Gramatica de Ingles, Paso a Paso"  
"Training by Design"

"Running Literacy and ESL Workshops and Painless Grammar."

## "La Cucaracha" speaks:

Have you read and dismissed the suggestion to help your student write and maybe have it published next year? Now, think again! What an opportunity! Follow Dorothy Weedman's example. Carve out some time to check the additions to the website and to look over the materials in the Resource Center, also. Our students get energized as we get creative and activated.

## Reading Tips:

*Jackie Yon*

Computers can become teaching partners. Who wouldn't want a partner to help explain reading skills or provide practice? Computers can provide immediate feedback to the learner and the tutor. Free websites can provide such assistance. Although not everyone supports the use of computers, the websites that are listed were reviewed by a panel for *The Reading Teacher* (November, 2009). These websites support reading instruction and have been shown to support student engagement and achievement. The following websites can enhance literacy learning. The sites listed are for students in grades K-5 however the sites should provide learning and reinforcement of learning how to read and understand the English language.

Website Recommendations:

**Into the Book** [www.reading.ecb.org/index.html](http://www.reading.ecb.org/index.html) Grades K-4. This site provides support for several reading strategies (prior knowledge, making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, summarizing).

**Interactive Cinderella Story:** [www.learner.org/interactives/story/index.html](http://www.learner.org/interactives/story/index.html) Grades 2-5 Students learn about the elements of a story: setting, characters, plot, and conflict.

**Starfall:** [www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com) K-2. This is one of the best sites for young readers. Sections address different levels of learning.

Summary

Using computers as an instructional partner in literacy enables learners to take ownership of their learning. If a learner has access to a computer in the home or a library these websites can reinforce reading being taught by the tutor. Although these websites are intended for students in the elementary grades the format being used can be challenging and entertaining for an adult learner.

*Jackie is a former Luxemburg-Casco Elementary reading teacher and Title 1 Instructor, a past Kewaunee Grade School, and is on the Board of Directors for Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County. We are fortunate to have her with us!*

## Results of Tutor Survey 2009 (August)

If you would like to build a stronger Literacy Partners, join a committee now! Call any board member or Bob at 676-2061.

**Question 1.** (only for tutors using Laubach as a text)

Check all that apply:

- 13 The skills taught in Laubach are important.
- 14 My student is interested in most of the stories.
- 14 I feel the teachers' editions do a good job telling me what to do.
- 5 I do not like Laubach and feel other textbooks should be explored.

Bob: This question will be addressed again in one year. We need more feedback before action is taken. Our student evaluation committee is always looking for better options.

**Question 2.**

Health literacy would help the student deal more effectively with health care providers and make wise choices with health care issues.

Check all that apply:

- 14 I feel health literacy is important and should be part of our literacy instruction.
- 4 I feel health literacy is important but should be handled completely separate from our literacy instruction.
- 1 I do not feel health literacy instruction is important and I would not like to get involved in it.

**Question 3.**

Our workshop topics in 2009 included reading comprehension, student writing, and Hispanic Culture. The workshops I'd like to see in 2010 are:

The topics listed are in order of response: conversation/pronunciation, learning styles, and cultural differences. Check the calendar for the upcoming 2010 workshops and seminars.

#### Question 4.

Please check ONE:

- 2 I have not needed help from our support team (Barb, Maureen, Bob)
- 3 I have asked for help and have received satisfactory support.  
I have asked for help and received poor help from our support team.
- 14 I have asked for and received excellent help from our support team.

#### Question 5

Please check ONE:

- 5 I have not seen a need to use any of the materials in the Resource Center
- 2 I have occasionally used the Resource Center.
- 12 I use the Resource Center 3 times or more per year.

**BOB:** You can do an excellent job without using the Resource Center using the tutor made materials. Nothing beats enthusiasm and creativity. A central location for the center would help, but it not available or affordable at this time. We cannot afford multiple copies of materials in multiple locations.

#### Question 6.

Check ALL that apply:

I would use the Resource Center more if.....

- 12 it was closer to my home.  
it had materials I needed.
- 6 I had more time with my student.  
--(fill in your own answer)

#### Question 7.

Please check ONE: If you check (B), please complete fully.

- 15 A. our Resource Center contains all of the materials I need at this point in time. I feel there is nothing I would like ordered.
- 4 B. I feel the Resource Center is weak in the following areas and materials should be ordered:

**Bob:** I agree the Resource Center is adequate at this time. A few said we need more math materials.

#### Question 8.

Please underline ONE:

If the Resource Center had hours that fit my schedule, and I could schedule a computer, my student and I (WOULD or WOULD NOT) use computers at Hillcrest School.

- 8 said they were interested
- 5 said NO
- 6 gave no answer

#### Question 9.

Please underline ONE:

If my student would be able to use a computer at Hillcrest School (without me) and there would be staff to help him/her, I think my student (WOULD or WOULD NOT) take advantage of this opportunity.

8 would, 11 would not take advantage of computers at Hillcrest.

**Bob:** This is a possibility in the future. It would work best if we had regular hours at Hillcrest and had a staff person there to assist. Two tutors are successfully running a computer program at St. Mary's School in Algoma. Currently, there are computers available at the public libraries and NWTC in Luxemburg.

#### Question 10.

Please check ONE:

The "Star" Newsletter:

- Does not keep me informed about organizational news.
- 2 Does a fair job of keeping me informed.

17 Does a good job of keeping me informed.

**Question 11.**

What kinds of things would you like to see in the "Star" Newsletter?

Most replied that "tutor tips" or "ways to help tutors" would be helpful. We'll print everything submitted! Other responses were to add more student success stories.

**Bob:** I agree totally with adding more success stories to our newsletter. Tutors must let us know about student successes. We'll print everything submitted.

Since the survey, we have added, "From the Tutor's Point of View" and a column written by Jackie Yon, a former reading teacher. We take your comments very seriously!

**Question 12.**

Please check ONE:

Has your student(s) gained employment or earned a promotion since you started tutoring?

No

7 Yes (If Yes, please explain in further detail)

**Bob:** This is one topic that tutors should send to our newspaper staff or the student could write up an article. We cannot pass accomplishments on to our donors and community if we don't hear about them.

**Question 13.**

Please check ONE:

During tutor sharing sessions, tutors discuss topics of common concern. After excellent attendance in 2006, attendance dropped greatly in 2007 and 2008 to a point where we did not continue them in 2009.

11 I would like sharing sessions continued once again

8 I would not attend sharing sessions.

**Bob:** If you would like to start sharing sessions, call me at 846-2516 and give me a best day and time you could meet.

**Question 14.**

Please fill in your ideas below to the following question:

As an organization, I wish we would.....

The number one answer was to put together a brochure with information where my student could get help through the county, state, and federal government.

**Bob:** We are working on it.

The next most common response was to get more publicity in the papers.

**Bob:** I agree, but it is not always possible. For example, the essay winner did not want the news in the papers, however did agree to allow it to appear in our newsletter. We did have a least 6 articles in the newspapers in 2009, including a front page story. If you have any ideas that could help our outreach committee improve our public relations, please call me.

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Sister Lorraine and Sister Mary Anne enjoy a brat at the Algoma Lions "Brat Fry for Literacy."