



## From the Back of the Boat

By: Bob Garfinkel

I have been a news junkie for almost 60 years, watching the news on TV and listening to the radio for hours at end. I am tired of the the bickering, whining, and conflicting reports from station to station. To top it off, the newshas been scary from Korean missiles to conflicts in North Carolina, to the floods in Texas. I believe that to be an informed citizen and voter, a person must be informed. However, I reached a tipping point with NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox News and others where you can get a news report that fits your point of view just by selecting a certain channel. After a depressing couple of weeks watching three or four stories closely, I have limited myself to one hour of newsdaily. In 70 years on this earth, I have seen our country go through many hard times. Never in my lifetime have we seen the people of this country as divided as today. There are riots in the streets in the South, statues taken down in town squares and cemeteries, and violence during peace marches. What does this have to do with literacy? First of all, there's a movement to ban certain Civil War books and movies right now. The Memphis Film Festival has banned "Gone with the Wind" for next year's festival! This movie is fiction and has little to do with history. What's next? Take down statues of Washington and Jefferson because the owned slaves? In my opinion, the effort to sanitize history is wrong and immoral. Several generations of Germans have no knowledge of Hitler and the Holocaust since they sanitized their history books and left events out. If we don't teach history in our schools in an accurate way, we are doomed to repeat it .Perhaps, more importantly, from all these events, I have become grateful for living in Northeast Wisconsin. Except for the swastika found on a sign several years ago, we have been relatively free of hatred in our county. I am thankful for the many service organizations and projects to help others locally. Literacy Partners is one of these organizations. We've just come out of two wonderful programs. The first is our pig roast in conjunction with HCE. I have never seen two organizations work so well in a combined effort. Secondly, Back to School Day was a HUGE success leveling the playing field for the first day of school providing school supplies to low income families.

Sorry for rambling on, but much of this has been on my mind 24/7. Literacy Partners and other organizations in our area have been uniting people instead of the great divide that's going on elsewhere. At this time, I want to thank the many volunteers we have had this year to make our events great successes. We are making a positive difference in Kewaunee County.

# THE STAR

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## A Missed Memory...

Ruthie Woodbeck, Tutor

***During the last edition of The Star, we missed including this great story. Please take a second to read it—you won't regret it!***

We met on April 5 and began classes on the 12th. The first time we met, Guadelupe (otherwise known as Lupita) hugged me. She told me later that the first time she met me she felt peace and was not afraid. She has been afraid since coming here as this is her first time away from her parents (she moved here in August 2016), and she doesn't feel welcomed by most American women. We've had a sweet relationship ever since the beginning.

Lupita is extremely brave and willing to do whatever it takes to communicate. She has shared several "survival" situations, and her bravery is remarkable. No American should ever say of her that she doesn't want to learn English! One day she needed to purchase a money order from the PO, so she asked if I would take her. I introduced her to Lisa, the Post Master that day, and told Lisa that Lupita is learning English. That way, the next time they met each other, it would be a familiar face for Lupita, and Lisa would hopefully be more understanding. I was thrilled when Lupita told me that she had gone to the PO herself the next time and was able to get her own money order without me! Yahoo! We're going to repeat this scenario with the Library, grocery store and other places that she wants to locally connect with.

Mexican Mother's Day fell on our class date. When I arrived, she had just finished a long conversation with her mom and was SO homesick. After a good cry, I decided it was best to change the class venue, so we went to the Lake and did our class by water's edge. She was so much more at peace and enjoyed a good morning outside! What a blessing to have gorgeous weather that day!

She told me several times that her children couldn't wait to meet me. Our first encounter went well, and we discovered that her son shares my husband's birthday, and her husband shares my daughter's birthday. Looks like we'll have a big fiesta in the fall! I've since brought them some table games that they can borrow and use. Next week we're all going to the Library so that the children can occupy their summer well and so that Lupita can find simple books that she can read to her children.

She has a relative living with her that supposedly knows English but won't use it. I've made it my goal to get to know this young lady and to speak to her in English every time I see her and to encourage her to help Lupita with hers. It's working! She's warmed up to me and

speaks to me in English (bashfully but at least she does it).

Yesterday when I left, we did our usual hug, and Lupita told me that my hugs take away all of her stress (of which she has quite a bit). I gave her an extra one to "carry her through the week". I've been where she is, and it's a blessing to bring encouragement to someone else in the same situation!

We laugh together, we cry together, and we learn from each other! It's truly a life-changing relationship for both of us! I cannot thank God enough for putting us together through the wisdom and insight of Kate Phillips. When we are used of God to bring help to someone, we are often the most blessed, but it means a lot as well that He can use me to be a blessing in return. We're never the same when we give of ourselves, and our lives are forever changed!

I'm looking forward to more and more weeks ahead! Thank you for this precious opportunity! ,  
Ruthie.

## Recognition Day Revisited

After years of attracting 125 to 200 people at our Recognition Day celebration, this year we barely had 40 sign up. We scheduled the event a week later to avoid Shanty Days. Earlier dates didn't work out even though we reserved the shelter last January. Basically, with a poor turn-out and 3/4 of those being recognized unable to attend, our Board of Directors voted to reschedule the event late winter/early spring—or possibly just wait until next summer and try again. If in winter, the event will be held inside as we did for the first 7 Recognition Days. Student books, awards, and books to take home will be on the program. If we reschedule for summer, it will once again be at Bruemmer Park. If you have an opinion or suggestion, please email Bob or Anne!

## Step Up and Be Counted!

At least 2 more Board of Director seats will be open in our election the first Thursday in November. We also need a student to throw his/her hat in the ring as a student Board Member is needed. As far as a regular Board position, the nominee does ***not have to be a tutor.***

What's involved in being on the Board? How much time does it take? We meet once every 2 months for roughly two hours. Starting in January, we will meet mornings (time and day to be determined) in our Resource Center in the United Methodist Church in Algoma. Every Board member is on at least one committee which meets once or twice a year.

The Board determines tutor, student, and organization policy. We determine the direction our organization will take. If you want to see us continue to succeed, please call Bob to nominate yourself or someone else before the end of October.

## Why is English So Hard for My Student?

Bob Garfinkel, President, Mentor & Tutor

Why is my student struggling with learning English? Personally, languages have always been a challenge for me. I even struggled with Spanish! I also studied Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish. At times, I even have problems with my native language, English! Many adults struggle with learning how to play instruments, games like Scrabble and Rummy Cup (Israeli game), learning dance steps, and on and on. I am not dismissing many the reasons some students have difficulty learning English. For some, learning a second language is just difficult.

Most experts that rate languages as far as difficulty to learn don't rate English in the hardest top 10. Why is it so hard for many students? First, let's look at the learner. Many of our students are Hispanic and should be an easy transition to English. The closer a new language is to your original language the easier it is to learn. Right? In most cases this is true. English speakers have an easier time learning Spanish and French than Chinese or Korean. Spanish speakers are familiar with our letters and many words in both languages are very similar. That's about where similarities end. If you look at the educational history of most of our Hispanic students, most dropped out of school in 6th grade or sooner. Generalizing, but not always, a student with poor language skills in the native language has difficulty learning a second language. Add a heavy, physical work load on the job with strong family commitment time-wise and you might start to understand the struggle. Many of our students do not have time or energy for homework. I'm not making excuses for these student, just a reality check. I do hold our students accountable for not speaking English in the home. How can you learn a new language and not practice it? I have tried to encourage students' children to speak English in the

home with little success. I even tried a game that whenever family members entered a certain room in the house, only English would be spoken there. Good idea, but family members stayed out of that room!! Part of the answer is to speak as much English as you can together in class every week. Talk about families, etc.. My student dances on weekends. We talk about that. I have thought about discussion groups. They don't fit into most peoples' schedule. Field trips to the grocery store and pharmacy have helped. Even Bruemmer Park's zoo has been beneficial. Walks in the spring and fall in a city or town have worked wonders. How about watching American tv once in awhile instead of the Spanish Channel? One of my students even gave me a tour of the farm where he worked. Getting out of the classroom can be a great learning experience. And please don't get me wrong, many students have left our classes being quite fluent and successful in their work and in the business world. What I am saying is if the student spends 1.5 hour a week speaking English in class and nowhere else, progress might be slow.

The student should not take all of the blame for having a difficult time learning English. Karl Dehm of the Oxford Royal Company makes some great points about English.

1. It takes our students about 2 years longer to read and write than totally phonetic languages like Spanish.
2. Many of our children, even the brightest, find their sense of logic unable to cope with the illogics of English spelling.
3. English makes no sense! There is no ham in hamburger or any apple in pineapple. There is no egg in eggplant.
4. English has many rules. As soon as you learn a rule, you must learn the exceptions. (*Found this on the internet*):  
I before e except when your foreign neighbor Keith receives a feisty caffeinated weightlifter.
5. The order of words in English is strange to many English learners.
6. If spelling wasn't hard enough, English pronunciation is the cause of much confusion. Similar

sounds have very different pronunciations and spellings.

Homophones are words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently. An example is, a bandage is wound around a wound. (Then you throw in to, too, and two along with there, their, and they're and you have a migraine coming on!!)

7. Idioms and slang are a real challenge. For instance, you are barking up the wrong tree.

8. Regional dialects and words from other countries may be a challenge (words like restaurant and others).

9. We take English for granted (quicksand works slowly and a guinea pig is not from Guinea nor is a pig).

In summary, English is a challenge to learn. Success depends on the student's educational background, willingness to learn, and the amount of practice he/she exerts. Exposure to the language, both written and spoken is the key. We have a lot of materials in the Resource Center on conversation, idioms, homophones, and more. There is a whole wide world out there including libraries, zoos, parks, stores, etc. A classroom is not the only place a student may learn. We also have excellent resource people to help.

## Summer Pig Roast Fundraiser with the Great Ladies of HCE!

What a summer we had! Our Pig Roast Fundraiser kicked off the crazy month of August with a *bang!* We got more pork than we ever had before—and we ran out---AGAIN!

I hope that you all got to see our flashy new signs around Kewaunee the week before the event. If you didn't get to see them, they look like this:



The event went on without a hitch on a beautiful Saturday.

A HUGE thank you to Thrivent Financial for helping kick off our event with a \$250 gift card donation. Also, to Catholic Financial for their \$250 matching funds, and Great Lakes Kraut for donating ALL of the sauerkraut!

Last but not least, THAN YOU Jan Zenner (Literacy Partners AND HCE) & Janice Gilbertson (HCE) for their help in planning, setting up, and cleaning up for the event!



# Thank You Green Bay Packers!



On behalf of our entire organization, these two cuties would like to extend a HUGE THANK YOU to the Green Bay Packers for their donation of this amazing signed ball for us to raffle off at our Pig Roast Fundraiser! What an awesome addition it was!

# Back To School Program

Oh boy—where do I start with this one? I am going to try to keep the story short and let the pictures speak for themselves for this event.

This event, as always, was a huge success. Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers that helped set up, work and clean up. In one day, we served over 344 children in Kewaunee County!

This year, our day was made extra special by a few visitors. Our visitors, from Nashville, TN, were with Soles4Souls. This amazing group grants us over 200 pair of shoes each year to hand out to kids in need throughout our county. This year, we were lucky enough to have them come out and experience our event!



While they were here, they were also able to meet with Erendida, a Literacy Partners' student, and her daughter, Maria. S4S has been getting updates on Maria for the last 4 years.



Being the amazing volunteers they are, not ONLY did they bring extra shoes, interview myself (Anne), Erendida, Maria and her family, but they also jumped right in and helped fitting children with new shoes at the event. AND—they brought help from Stans Fit for Your Feet in Milwaukee!

I will forever be eternally grateful for my path crossing with Tiffany Turner (pictured above interviewing Maria). Soles 4 Souls is an amazing organization, and just the fact that someone so giving and genuinely a “good person” decides to work there makes me like them even more.

## THANK YOU SO MUCH S4S! We LOVE YOU GUYS!

In addition to all the shoe excitement, we can't forget our other new addition this year! QualiT Inc, Stodola's IGA, 4-Legged Friends, Dominion and NEW Plastics came together and funded spirit wear shirts for all children at the program! Children were given Algoma, Kewaunee or Luxemburg themed shirts for FREE to wear to school on sprirt days. How awesomely amazing is that!?







Kewaunee County Celebrates:



**Hispanic**

**Heritage Night**

*With culture, food and conversation*

When: Sunday, October 15th from 4:00pm to 7:00pm

Where: Kewaunee School Cafeteria, 921 Third Street

Come celebrate the Hispanic culture with food, sharing stories, traditions, fun and games!



**Salsa Contest!**

**Prizes for the best salsas!**

This event is a Potluck. Please bring a dish to share.

Please RSVP to Nora before October 11<sup>th</sup> at (920) 487-2111

Sponsored by:



El Condado de Kewaunee Celebra:



**Noche de la**

**Herencia Hispana**

*Con cultura, comida y conversaciones*

Quando: Domingo, 15 de octubre de 4:00pm a 7:00pm

Donde: En la escuela primaria de Kewaunee, 921 Third Street

¡Venga a celebrar la cultura hispana con comida, historias, tradiciones, diversión y juegos!



**Tendremos un concurso de Salsas**

**¡Premios para las salsas más deliciosas!**

Traiga su plato favorito para compartir con todos.

Por favor llamar a Nora para confirmar su asistencia antes del 11 de octubre al

(920) 487-2111

Patrocinado por



A special “Thank You” to all of our officers, Board of Directors, advisors, and supporters. Without your hard work, dedication and generosity, Literacy Partners would not be the successful non-profit organization that it is today. We appreciate you all very much!

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