



Literacy Council for Josephine County

FALL/WINTER, 2016-2017

132 N.E. B St. Room 23, Grants Pass, OR, 97526

WANTED: Tutors for the Literacy Council No experience necessary

Yes, that's right. It's not just retired teachers or English majors who make successful Literacy Council tutors.

Just ask Margaret Libby.

"You don't have to be an expert or have the experience to start with," says Margaret, who became a Literacy Council tutor this fall. "This is something brand new to me, but it's been a lot of fun."

As a registered nurse in central California, Margaret worked in hospitals, doctor's offices and home care situations. And though she lectured at statewide nursing conferences and trained new nurses one-on-one, she had no formal teaching background.

After she retired and moved to Grants Pass, her search for meaningful volunteer work led her to the Literacy Council, where volunteer coordinator Bette Mohr matched her with student Carolina Cruz.

Born in Mexico and working as a restaurant hostess in Grants Pass, Carolina had sought help from the Literacy Council to improve her writing, pronunciation and fluency in English.

She and Margaret have been working together since October, meeting twice a week in the Literacy Council office on B Street in Grants Pass.

Though most tutors work with their students for an hour at a time, Margaret and Carolina meet for two hours each session.

"To me, an hour is nothing," Carolina says. "I ask, can't we go longer? I really want to learn."

Margaret and Carolina use a variety of materials in their studies, particularly books on grammar, pronunciation and verb tenses, materials that are available in the Literacy Council library.

The women speak English during class, but Margaret



Margaret Libby, left, works with Carolina Cruz in the Literacy Council office.

says that the Spanish she learned in high school and used in her nursing work has come in handy working with Carolina.

Because she has no prior teaching experience, Margaret says she's grateful that the Literacy Council offers her ongoing training and mentoring.

"Bette (Mohr) was very helpful getting me started and she continues to be a great support," Margaret says.

Though she got into tutoring as a way of helping others, Margaret says she's found it to be beneficial for herself as well.

"It's a rewarding experience," she says. "and it can be a learning experience, too. I'd recommend it to anyone."

— Submitted by Kathleen Alaks



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Contact Us!

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CALENDAR

Upcoming Board Meetings

Meetings are at 12:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, at the Literacy Council office, 132 N.E. B St., Room 23, on the third floor of the Newman United Methodist Church offices.

The next meetings are:

Dec. 21	May 17
Jan. 18	June 21
Feb. 15	July 19
March 15	Aug. 16
April 19	Sept. 20

In this season of giving, try volunteering

Dear Friends of the Literacy Council,

Many of you have thought well of our work and supported it with contributions and encouragement.

In this season of giving and thankfulness I wish to thank you all for assisting those in need through our Council. We have formally thanked those who donated and the tutors who have served.

Gratitude is a blessing on all the souls involved. To our community, we would love to give you more than our thanks. We want to give you the opportunity to volunteer.

Volunteering has many forms and you will find it a joy-filled experience. Maybe you have considered being a volunteer tutor or encouraging a friend to do so. That usually requires one-hour sessions twice a week with a student. Right now, that would help tremendously.

However, you may not know that we have a need for two more board members. Please, friends, if you or someone you know could help in the leadership and service promoting the Literacy Council, it would do our county a great favor.

The board meets just once a month. Board members are needed to be out in the community so that we can become aware of needs and learn of opportunities.

Of course, there is the nitty gritty of helping stuff envelopes for mailings, and arranging books at the annual used book sale.

And board members are invited to our annual Christmas party, where they get to meet our tutors.

So, now you all are given the way you can help us directly. If perhaps you don't see this opportunity for yourself, please encourage people you meet to join us.

Perhaps someone who is newly retired, or who has just moved to town and doesn't know where they might fit in to the life of the community.

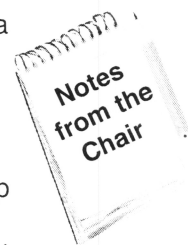
Give them our newsletter. Tell them how we help those who need to learn to read even if they have dyslexia, get citizenship, speak and read English or get their GED.

Please talk to at least one person who might fill one of our volunteer posts. It will be good to have you join in that active way.

You can find our contact information right on this page. Give us a call.

Thank you.

— Andrea Dougan, Chairperson





and

Our newest board member

Robert Moore, owner of Oregon Books, is the newest member of the Literacy Council board of directors.

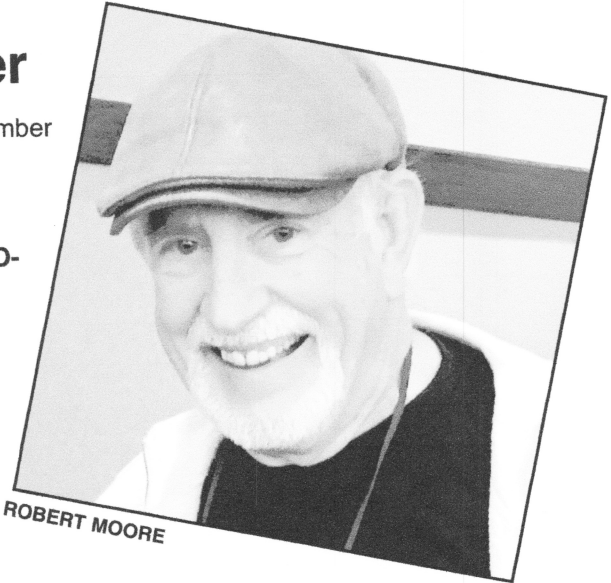
Let's meet him:

Q. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.

A. I was born in Colorado Springs, Colo., to a young lieutenant convalescing while teaching NROTC at the local college. We moved around the country until 1956, when we arrived in Josephine County to survive the next global war with China.

I had the longest bus ride to attend Grants Pass High School until I graduated in 1963, after which I attended the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, N.Y., where I learned to drive really big ships.

I had additional education at Oregon State University (forestry), Southern Oregon University (business), and University of Alaska (worked on MBA). I worked in banking for 23 years until I was convinced by my wife Karen (now 49 ½ years), to help her open a bookstore.



Q. HOW AND WHEN DID YOU COME TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE LITERACY COUNCIL?

A. At my age, I thought it was time to "give back," where I might make a difference. Individuals deprived from one of the greatest joys of reading, sang out to me.

Q. WHAT, IF ANY, OTHER VOLUNTEER WORK DO YOU DO IN THE COMMUNITY? WHAT OTHER GROUPS OR CLUBS ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH?

A. I'm very involved in our northwest regional association of booksellers. When time permits, I enjoy serving at the kitchen at St. Vincent de Paul.

Q. WHO ARE YOUR FAVORITE AUTHORS?

A. The most underrated fiction writer today is Harlan Coben, who can describe in two sentences what other writers will take a chapter to accomplish. Eric Larson is a master of historical nonfiction, who can capture you in his accounts that are as intriguing as any excellent suspense novel, but you already know the end.

But for both fiction and nonfiction, it's my friend, best selling author Douglas Preston, who is a great storyteller in reality or fantasy. He is also an activist and spokesman for Authors United.

Q. IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERT ISLAND WHAT ONE BOOK WOULD YOU WANT TO HAVE WITH YOU?

A. The Bible, of course, to help me along as I starved to death or died of boredom.

Q. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE LITERACY COUNCIL DO TO IMPROVE ITS VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY?

A. We need to do a better job of telling our story, so that we can reach those in need and reach those who can help them.



The joy of citizenship

The one thing Literacy Council student Camelia Lopez really wanted to do was to vote in this year's elections in November.

There was just one thing standing in her way: She wasn't yet a United States citizen.

Camelia came to the U.S. in 2001, from a small village near Mexico City. She is married with a 12-year-old daughter and has held various jobs at several local restaurants.

She came to the Literacy Council hoping to get help preparing for her citizenship test. She and tutor Jeanne Gostnell spent the entire summer studying American history, politics and geography, the rights and responsibilities of citizens and symbols of democracy.

"We worked on what she was going to be tested for," says Jeanne. "She had a book of 100 questions that could be on the test."

"I was scared about those 100 questions," Camelia says, "so I studied them all."

"She was really studying a lot," says Jeanne.

Come October, Camelia was ready for the test. Jeanne drove with her to Portland.

"She didn't want to go up by herself and her partner had to work, so I went with her," Jeanne says.

They spent the night with Jeanne's niece. The next day was test day.

"She took the test and passed," Jeanne says. "We went out to lunch to celebrate then went back to get her sworn in."

On the drive home, they stopped in Albany and searched out the post office, looking for a voter registration



Camelia Lopez is proud to be a U.S. citizen.

form.

"We got there just about five minutes to 5 p.m. Just in time," Jeanne says. "She filled out the registration form and the clerk stamped it for her right then and there."

And Camelia was able to vote in this fall's election.

"I am very happy," she says. "And very thankful for the people who helped me."

Next stop for Camelia: working to improve her spoken English and earning her GED.

— Submitted by Kathleen Alaks

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