



Literacy Council for Josephine County

SPRING/SUMMER, 2010

223 S.E. M Street, Grants Pass, OR, 97526

Literacy Council is among the area's blessings

My wife and I are truly blessed to be living in Josephine County and, in particular, Grants Pass.

It is not only physically beautiful with its mountains, trees and Rogue River but also its very giving citizens. Volunteers abound here in Grants Pass and whether it be in our churches, hospital, libraries, service clubs, youth groups, performing arts, city boards and commissions or neighborhood citizen groups, one can always find someone to help who does so willingly and with a smile.

Notes from the Chair

The Literacy Council for Josephine County is just such a group. All of us are volunteers. That's right...not one paid staff member!

We have been in operation for almost 25 years and have grown from humble beginnings to now having 25 or so instructors and 25 to 30 students. Additionally we have 10 active board members, most of whom also act as instructors.

I am often asked what we do for our community. We teach English as a second language.

We help people acquire citizenship, improve job skills, earn a GED, qualify for enrollment at Rogue Community College and meet other people. All this for no cost,

THATS RIGHT. ABSOLUTELY FREE.

How can you help?

If you have teaching skills, administration skills, background in business, library or simply just like to help, give me a call at 541-761-2804 or drop by and see our facility.

We are located at the Coalition for Kids at the corner of Eighth and M streets. We look forward to meeting you.

— Allan Hammer
Literacy Council
Chairman

Get lit (Literature, that is)

■ **WHAT:** Literacy Council Book Sale

■ **WHEN:** 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 7

■ **WHERE:** Daily Courier parking lot, Seventh and J streets, Grants Pass

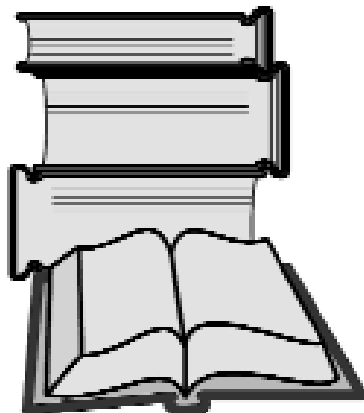
■ **DETAILS:** This is a big event for us. Last year, we raised more than \$800 in six hours selling tattered romances and novels, well-read adventure paperbacks and mysteries, children's books, reference books, how-to books, self-help books, cookbooks and travel magazines.

■ **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Give some books. We'll take anything you've got.

Or, give some cash. Stop by the sale and buy some books.

Or, give some time. Volunteer to spend an hour or two helping out at our major fundraiser of the year.

Call Kathleen Alaks at 541-474-3815 or 541-955-5371 to arrange to have your books picked up or to sign up to volunteer.





Literacy Council for Josephine County

Page 2 SPRING/SUMMER, 2010

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Literacy Council Board Members

- **Allan Hammer, chairman**
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- **Liz Medley, vice chair, tutor**
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- **Don Stocking, treasurer**
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- **Merle Nyberg, tutor**
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- **Mary Slayter, tutor**
phone: 541-476-6315
e-mail: mslyater1@earthlink.net
- **Tutor coordinator**
Position open

We're online!

Check out the Literacy Council's Web site:

literacyjoco.weebly.com

CALENDAR

Upcoming Board Meetings

Meetings are at 12:30 p.m. at the Literacy Council office, 223 S.E. M St. in Grants Pass. (That's in the Coalition for Kids building; entrance is off the back parking lot.)

July 8	Oct. 14
Aug. 12	Nov. 11
Sept. 9	Dec. 9

What tutors are saying

Until April, we asked tutors to report just their hours. Now, we're asking for total hours and comments. Here are some of the comments that came in in May to the general question, "How ya'doing?"

Carolyn's learner reads English wonderfully well but she would like to be more confident about her pronunciation and know that people can readily understand her. They're using a tape recorder so the learner can hear herself speak. Also, Carolyn plans to bring her cell phone so they can call each other from different rooms, and talk without depending on gestures and expressions to understand each other.

Bette meets with her learners at their restaurant. A waitress stopped by to say that the cooks speak better English and they are beginning to talk together now.

Cory meets with a husband and wife. Their lessons include computerized reading and spelling drills. The wife wants to submit a classified ad in the newspaper so she can sell children's clothing. She and Cory are writing the ad and the student practices phoning it in. Two months ago, the husband's English was better than his wife's. Now she has caught up and is correcting his grammar.

Mary Lou has started lessons with a couple new to America. They've been using maps and talking about their families and goals. And, of course, there is a lot of conversation about their new baby.

Merle's lessons always include current events and they read about the candidates in the voter's guide. Like many of us, he also brings in resources on medical questions.

Sue Ward's lessons are going well. Although the lessons are in "English immersion" — in English only — Sue says, "The bonus is that my Spanish is also improving."

Sue Dunaway brought in photos of her family and drew diagrams so that her students can learn words like grandparents, aunts and cousins. They often refer to an English-Chinese picture dictionary.

Liz and her student talk about items

from the "realia drawer." The drawer holds ordinary things like pill bottles, diapers, measuring cups, newspapers, job application forms and toys — common things that someone should be able to name.

They read a story on Tuesday about a guy whose car broke down. The student's car was troublesome, so they arranged for him to drop by and let her husband look it over. On Thursday, as they were leaving after their lesson, they saw another tutor and her student bent over the engine of her car. The student was working on the tutor's car.

Gene's student was going on a long visit home, so they used the picture dictionary and searched the Internet for travel information. They practiced conversation so she could be understood when she talked with airline personnel.

Mary Lou is using Ventures 2 and an atlas and map talking about where they lived in China, about their families, their goals, etc.

Mary: "Last week, M. explained her older daughter's medical problems, and we wrote what she said on the board. I was amazed that E. was able to read the information quite competently. She has struggled with reading, so this was a real accomplishment.

Gene: "L. is doing very well and is very dedicated to learning. We worked extensively with the Chinese-English texts, considering things that have to do with house, school, work, post office, airport, etc.

"We used the English-Chinese dictionary to explain any concepts that come up in the course of the lesson. One text dealt with starting up a restaurant, hiring employees, etc.

"We also used the phonetics computer program to help her with vowel sounds. I am very impressed with L's dedication and feel that it shouldn't be too long before she will be ready to try for citizenship."



Literacy Council for Josephine County

Page 3 SPRING/SUMMER, 2010

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Who's Who? Meet board member Nancy Hitchcock

Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH THE LITERACY COUNCIL?

A. I started tutoring in 1999 after retiring in 1996. My first experience was working with Eleanor Hester with a group of five Thai students from a local restaurant.

I've worked with several individual students, plus two groups of mothers of Head Start pupils.

All my Literacy Council tutoring has been with students who want to improve their English language skills. I'm fascinated by non-native speakers' abilities to learn a new language, and also by the English language itself, with its many quirky or irregular constructions, synonyms and borrowings from other languages.

Q. WHAT WAS IT THAT FIRST GOT YOU INVOLVED WITH THE LITERACY COUNCIL?

A. It was probably the regular RSVP articles in the Courier asking for volunteers. After my mother retired in Redding, she tutored for the literacy council and enjoyed it for several years. So I was familiar with the concept.

Q. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND TEACHING BACKGROUND.

A. We moved to Grants Pass at the beginning of 1971, and we raised our family here. I taught English and reading at South Middle School, and was the school librarian at North Middle School.

I grew up in northern California — Susanville and Redding — attended Shasta College and graduated from UC Davis. I also attended UC Berkeley, the University of Arizona and Southern Oregon College for various teaching and educational certifications and degrees.



Nancy helps a young reader sign up for his new library card.

Q. BESIDES TUTORING, WHAT OTHER DUTIES HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE LITERACY COUNCIL?

A. I've been on the board of directors about five years. I also help with the annual post-testing of our students. These standardized tests for adult learners help us gauge student progress and provide Rogue Community



NANCY HITCHCOCK

College with statistical information for adult-learner community programs such as ours.

Q. ANY PARTICULARLY MEMORABLE STUDENTS OR TUTORING EXPERIENCES?

A. I love the English-language questions students bring from their experience — sometimes from work, their children's school, or a visit to a doctor.

Sometimes they have confused words that sound alike — ladder, letter, leader; sometimes there are new synonyms or idioms people use.

Q. WHY IS THE LITERACY COUNCILS WORK WORTH ALL THE TIME AND EFFORT YOU PUT INTO IT?

A. When busy adults take the time and effort to improve their literacy skills, it's important to have willing people to help them. Although there are great community resources such as Rogue Community College and the Job Council...

Q. WHAT OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH?

A. I'm the membership chair of Josephine Community Libraries and was involved with getting the libraries re-opened. And I'm on the Grants Pass Sister City Committee.

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

A. It would have to be a long one — maybe a Dickens or a Tolstoy. Or, better yet, a world history or travel book. I really liked Rebecca West's "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon," an old account of her travels in the Balkans.

Tutor Profile



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Page 4 SPRING/SUMMER, 2010

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Opportunities abound! Good jobs await, if you're thinking of volunteering. Please look them over. You just might fit in!

■ **TUTOR:** Join our corps of valuable tutors who work one-on-one with committed adults, eager to learn. We have good teaching materials and ongoing training. Commitment: two 60- to 90-minute classes a week, plus preparation.

■ **LIBRARIAN:** This volunteer becomes thoroughly familiar with our resources — checking materials in and out, suggesting materials when a tutor wants a recommendation, and maintaining a computerized inventory. It isn't a time-consuming job, but it's important.

■ **RECORD KEEPER:** Each learner's progress is tracked yearly with state-authorized standardized tests. The record keeper will learn our procedures and then, when a one-day certification class is offered, obtain credentials to give the tests.

■ **COORDINATOR:** This experienced volunteer interviews and matches applicants and tutors, and mentors them. The coordinator serves on the Board, interacts with all the workers, and represents us at meetings with other agencies.

■ **RECRUITER:** Constant recruiting is needed because the number of applicants is always larger than the number of tutors. This volunteer will reach out with speeches and publicity.

Learn more about us by calling Liz Medley, 541-956-8573.

Or, you're invited to attend meetings of the tutors or the board. Tutors meet and share information on the second Tuesday of each month at 11 a.m. Andrea Dougan leads discussions. The Board meets at 12:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month. Both meetings are at our office in the Coalition for Kids, 223 S.E. M St. in Grants Pass.

We thank you

GOOD WORK: In April, volunteers worked 280 hours.

DOOR PRIZE: So, you remember we kept the hall door propped open with a brick because once it was closed it was really hard to get out of the room. You twisted the doorknob over to the left and pushed on the knob. not the door? Usually that worked, but sometimes you'd try and try and just go out the other door. We were rescued by a frequent volunteer, Joe Cardoza of Rogue River, a retired plumbing contractor, building contractor and licensed locksmith. Thanks, Joe!

IN THE NEWS: Thanks go out to The Daily Courier and Kelly Wessels of RSVP for helping recruit volunteers. Kelly frequently lists the Literacy Council in her newspaper column promoting volunteerism. And, through the Daily Courier's Community Calendar, the public is invited to attend our monthly tutor roundtable, at 11 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, and the Board meeting at 12:30 p.m. on each second Thursday.

Newsletter Ideas?

Have something you'd like to see in the next newsletter? A profile of a tutor or student? Acknowledgement of someone who helped the Council achieve a goal? A review of a favorite book? Tutoring strategies, Web sites or publications that worked for you? Let me know. The newsletter publishes twice a year, in spring and fall. Contact Kathleen Alaks: 541-955-5371 (home), 541-474-3815 (work) or kalaks@thedailycourier.com.

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