



# Literacy Link

Winter/Spring 2008



## Abington Free Library Adult Literacy Program

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## Program Update

January has shown spring-like weather, so “Winter/Spring 2008” seems to be an appropriate title for this issue. Meanwhile, the work by all the volunteers in our literacy program knows no season. They work all-year round, offering educational services from ESL and ABE to GED. Improvement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking is achieved. All tutors are invited to use and peruse our

Literacy and ESL collection of tutoring materials. Below you will find the dates of the winter/spring Tutor Support meetings and workshops. The dates are listed through June. Some of the topics will be announced later, but they will certainly be based on the results of the survey sent out in November. We hope you will attend as many activities as possible.

## Upcoming Events

**Wednesday, February 20, 2- 4 p.m. *Tutor Support meeting: a workshop on tutoring ESL students.*** In-house assistance for new and experienced tutors on the 5 Ws of English as a Second Language.

**Monday, March 3 - 6:30 - 8:45 p.m. and Tuesday, March 4 - 6:30 - 8:45 p.m. *Spring Tutor Training.*** Both nights are mandatory for aspiring tutors! They are also open to all experienced volunteers, as the training offers something for them as well.

**Monday, April 7, 7:00-8:45 p.m. *Tutor Support Meeting.*** How do you teach reading?

**Tuesday, May 6, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. *Tutor Support Meeting.*** Topic TBA.

**Thursday, June 5, 7:00- 9:00 p.m. *Tutor Support Meeting.*** Topic TBA.

**Tuesday, June 3, 7:00 p.m.: Reception honoring students and tutors. Guests invited.**

## **On-going activities**

For all information, please call 215 885 5183 or e-mail: ablit1@yahoo.com

**Assessment Committee** – Barbara Cooperberg, Lois Bachman, Marcia Klafter, Marcia Jacoby and Rob Naborn oversee procedures for the TABE and BEST tests. Test outcomes are analyzed and reported. The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires administration of these standardized tests.

**Citizenship Committee** – Marilyn Greenwald, Chairperson, helps U.S. Citizenship candidates through the process from green card to citizenship. She is available to answer questions about U.S requirements.

**Conversation, Please!** - On Monday evenings at 7:15, Beverly Willett, Doranne Smith and Donna Hower lead an ESL [English as a Second Language] class for non-native speakers of English at the library. Many countries are represented, and only English is spoken.

**Conversation, Please!** - The daytime class meets Tuesday mornings, 10:30 till noon, under the supervision of three volunteer teachers. Ann Gaugler, Edis Hall and Sara Chernoff welcome ESL students and help them feel comfortable while they learn the language and culture of America.

**E-Quality Program Improvement Committee**  
Lois Bachman, Selma Dafilou, Arlene Franco, Marcia Klafter, Marcia Jacoby and Rob Naborn work together toward program improvement. How can our tutors and students be served better?

**Family Literacy** – This committee meets one morning a week in Abington. Edith Lane and Rena Spratt service two Head Start program there.

**GED Advisory** - Lois Bachman, GED advisor, is available through the Literacy Office to answer GED questions.

**Literacy Live** - A talented group of performers eager to spread the literacy word via a live, script-in-hand performance at your club, service organization, school, church or synagogue. What does it take to be a volunteer, how does a student feel about needing help, how can we help as tutors? Our group is talented and inspirational. Please volunteer your talents or inquire about a performance. Geri Tyler leads the troupe.

**Master Tutors**--Three Master Tutors (Lois Bachman, Marcia Klafter, and Barbara Cooperberg) are available to answer your questions regarding students, programs, materials and all literacy matters. Please utilize this great resource for any special needs.

**Technology Committee (Learning Center)** – Computer software, videos, and audio cassettes are all available in the Literacy Office. Technology advisers Marcia Jacoby and Elaine Lauff are ready to help.

**Tutor Support Committee** - We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers meeting once a month to help organize meetings, special events and program information.

**Workplace** - Rydal Park Retirement Community is the site of a Tuesday afternoon class for employees who need literacy help, led by a team of three: Doranne Smith, Peg Cheney and Ingrid Rivel.

**Write It Right** - Students in need of extra help with grammar and writing are welcome Thursday from 1-2:30pm, starting again on February 28. Judi Rosen leads this class, assisted by Bennett Fairorth. Individual instruction is available when needed.



## From Orchids to Tulips

Given my background in Old Europe, and feeling I could not be giving the orchids Marlyn gave so freely, I have made a switch to tulips. At this point they are on display on top of our TV/VCR set in the office. *Rob Naborn*

**Tulips**— to all our Abington Free Library staff, in reference, tech services, circulation, children's and, of course, the office staff. Your support is heart-warming.

**Tulips**— especially to the circulation staff, putting up with all the tutors and students leaving messages.

**Tulips**— to all the new and experienced tutors, for their relentless efforts to improve our students' lives.

**Tulips**— to Marilyn Greenwald, our Citizenship Chairperson, for organizing, updating and making inquiries about the latest requirements for citizenship candidates.

**Tulips**— to Marcia Jacoby and Elaine Lauff, tireless weekly helpers on eData and more!

**Tulips**— to Marcia Klafter for her Tutoring Tidbits.

**Tulips**— to the Family Literacy Committee, Edith Lane and Rena Spratt, for their dedication to two Head Start programs helping pre-schoolers in Abington.

**Tulips**— to Lois Bachman, our GED chairperson, advisor, test scorer for all standardized testing.

**Tulips**—to Geri Tyler for her work behind the scenes for Literacy Live, our theater group.

**Tulips**— to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for its continued support in the form of the annual grant. This is one huge factor making the Adult Literacy Program possible.

**Tulips**— to Karen Burnham and Rick Guyton for helping with the layout and printing of the Literacy Link.

**Tulips**— to Judi Rosen for all of her extraordinary efforts tutoring many students.

**Tulips**— to our Tutor Support Committee - Jane Taft, Elaine Lauff, Beverly Willett, Arlene Franco, Donna Hower, Ann Gaugler, Lois Bachman, Sheila Stieritz, Marcia Klafter and Maria Delatorre - for making important phone calls.

**Tulips**— to our classroom teachers of “Conversation, Please!” and Rydal Park Workplace. Beverly Willett, Doranne Smith, Donna Hower on Monday evening; Ann Gaugler, Edis Hall, and Sara Chernoff on Tuesday morning; and Peg Cheney, Ingrid Rivel, and Doranne Smith at Rydal Park.

And a **Whole Bunch of Tulips** to Marlyn Cohen, who very graciously helped me transition into the position she held for so many years. It is not easy to fill her shoes, but Marlyn is always available to help!

### Please...

- ... call the library's main number, 215 885 5180, for information regarding library closings **during inclement weather and/or national holidays and for library hours**. If the library is closed or hours shortened, inform your student ASAP.
- ... sign out all materials in the maroon sign-out book on the office desk under the first letter of your last name. When returned, cross out the entry. Please return any manuals and re-usable materials so that others may use them.
- ... call or e-mail us with any news, changes, goals reached, problems and questions.
- ... sign in at the circulation desk on the date you and your student are meeting. Those hours are calculated and recorded for the library statistics.
- ... give us your student progress report sheets for program data, hours and outcomes.

## Accountability

As mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in order to continue to qualify for our literacy grant, we need to show attendance, educational gains and goals met. The student progress reports, a.k.a. monthly attendance sheets including hours and educational gains, give the

program its validation and credit for our efforts. The pre and post test results are equally important, showing results of our efforts. Together we can work towards gains in these areas, ensuring continuation of our literacy program as one of the best in Montgomery County!

## Another Way to Help

The Library and our Literacy Program receive some financial help from two area supermarkets, but it involves some cooperation from you.

ACME Jenkintown donates money to our program based on receipts turned in at the Library. If you put your ACME receipts in the box marked “ACME” located at the Circulation Desk, near the entrance, the Library takes care of the rest.

Genuardi’s makes it even easier, by automatically adding up purchases by everyone who has signed up for eScrip. If you would like to help us this way, please follow the link to the eScrip information (also on the Library’s homepage): <http://abg.mclinc.org/donate/index.htm#escrip>.

## Tutoring Tidbits

Student Progress: *One Small Step at a Time*

There are times in our tutoring sessions that our students may feel that little is being accomplished or a plateau has been reached, and boredom or discouragement is setting in.

The following ideas may be of some help in avoiding this experience:

1. Staying with one workbook or text series may not provide enough interest, and more important, enough opportunity for practice and application. For each set of lessons, create additional challenges in order for your students to use their newly acquired skills. Word games, language experience stories, or even simply finding similar lessons in other workbooks will give your students exercises to reinforce what you have taught. Use some of the computer programs in the Literacy Office to add even more practice time.
2. Build a collection of index cards with new spelling, reading or vocabulary words on separate cards. Add word endings such as *-ed*, *-ing*, or add prefixes and suffixes to the initial word to broaden the student’s familiarity with how it can be used. Include a definition (if appropriate) and a sentence on the card using the word. For example: on one card you may have the word “help” with additional words such as “helped”, “helping”, “helpful”, “unhelpful” and a then a sentence (generated by the student) such as “My son will help me wash the car on Saturday”. Revisit these cards as a review to make sure that your student has retained material over a period of weeks.

Invent a way for the student to concretely see progress. This can simply be done by keeping a weekly tally of words learned or a list of skills mastered, comparing written materials done in previous sessions with newer work, or making a graph to show improvement of reading speed. Visual proof of learning may help your student feel satisfaction and pride.

*Marcia Klafter*

## ESL Teaching Tip #1

One way of reaching ESL students is through songs. Since the lyrics are set to music, repetition is not as much an issue, and listening to the songs several times will allow students to discover various grammatical patterns used.

I chose “*When I’m Sixty-Four*” by the Beatles. This song may seem a bit outdated, but it is one most of you (and probably some students) are familiar with. It was released in 1967, on the album *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, but Paul McCartney (b. 1942) wrote it when he was 16.

As a pre-exercise the student can write down [as homework, for example] and/or discuss what her/his life was or will be like when she/he was/is sixty-four. Then check her/his story against the song [needing/feeding me, grandchildren, losing my hair, Sunday mornings going for a ride].

In addition to grammatical patterns such as the continuous [Will you still be *sending*, *doing the garden*, *digging the weeds*] and contractions [If I’d been out ‘til quarter to three, you’ll be older too, when I’m sixty-four], you could focus on the cultural information [Valentine, rent a cottage] and the significance of the song [Is it a love song? Why (not)?], the performers, and the time period when it came out.

The internet can be a great help for your ‘research,’ but you can also come to the Literacy Office and use the computer to show your student what information is available on-line.

Do you have an ESL teaching tip? Please share it with us.

Rob Naborn

## New and Noteworthy Books in our Collection

In this section I will update you on books that have recently been added to our Literacy collection. They are not always new, but they may just be what you as a tutor have been looking for... For the first month they will be kept in a special section, after which I will ‘stack’ them according to their subject matter.

1. Broukal, M. 2004. *Weaving It Together. Connecting Reading and Writing*, Book 4.
2. Folse, K., et al. 2004. *Top 20 Great Grammar for Great Writing*.
3. Jenkins, R. 2005. *The Heinle Picture Dictionary* and the accompanying *Lesson Planner*.  
[includes activity bank and classroom presentation tool CD-ROM.]
5. Gianola, A. 2008. *That’s Life. Day-to-Day Stories and Language Activities*. [ESL Literacy Low-Intermediate.] [Sample packet]
6. Blanton, L. L. 2001. *Composition Practice*, Book 4.
7. Nadell, J., et al. 1998. *Vocabulary Basics*, including the *Instructor’s Edition*.

Please let me know if there are any books you believe should be part of our Literacy collection.

Rob Naborn, Program Administrator

Next ***Literacy Link***: July 2008.

Deadline for submissions: June 15



For Marlyn I offered to create a verse  
Then set out to gather data first.  
So little I had from my knowledge alone  
I needed assistance by note and by phone.

Everyone, it seems, feels enormous gratitude  
For this gal who retains such a positive attitude.  
No matter what happens, whatever the scope  
Marlyn, I'm told, never gives up hope.

She's generous with her time and generous in spirit  
With endless encouragement, how often I hear it!  
She's thoughtful and gifting as much as she's able  
Buys cards and lunches and a picnic table!

Indeed she's been marvelous since she enlisted...  
Created Abington's literacy program unassisted!  
The Black Hole of Calcutta is the place it all started...  
A dark storeroom where boxes and such things were  
carted.

A short class in Chinese might have helped her prepare  
If she could remember what happened in there!  
As a "people person" Marlyn is never detached  
Makes sure student and tutor are perfectly matched.

Some tutors, discouraged, in need of support,  
Were stood up or gave up almost, some report.  
But Marlyn was there, a constant defender  
And by example alone discouraged surrender.

With her intuitive nature, her patience, her reasons  
For 23 years is a girl for all seasons.  
The sound of her voice, that Scrantonian twang  
Reassuring and curing, like a bell that just rang.

Some tell of stories, funny years after  
Though at the time maybe not the source of great  
laughter...

When calling a student now we know to beware  
His wife on the phone may suspect an affair!

Marlyn Cohen has narratives as well...  
Each piece of her jewelry has a story to tell.  
The source of its purchase, the country or state,  
An anecdote its maker may have wished to relate.

She told of "bad blood" from an early transfusion  
But she's here to tell it despite the confusion.  
When told she looks lovely, well dressed, tailor- made  
Replies, "This has been in my closet for decades!"

If she's ever tired, it never shows  
With boundless energy she goes and goes  
She's complimentary, appreciative and gracious  
With joie de vivre she's always vivacious

Always has suggestions to try on  
And always has a shoulder to cry on  
And she's always creative in finding sources  
And whatever you suggest, Marlyn endorses

She converses, consoles  
Courteous, clear and concise  
She's close to perfect, to be precise  
Her early years as an educator

Even her childhood, she recalls all this later...  
We love to hear what she tells us, enjoy who she's become  
Respect where she's gotten and where she's come from  
This much I've learned... here is the gist...

There will never be anyone who will be this much missed  
From all that I know and have gathered, I think  
Marlyn, you're the eternal literacy link.

- written and performed by Geri Tyler at Marlyn's Retirement Dinner