

BEYOND THE PAGE



ADVOCACY . NETWORKING . EDUCATION
LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF MAINE . VOLUME 1 . AUTUMN 2007

MAJOR FUNDRAISER EVENT BENEFITS LV AFFILIATES

Chip Brewer, Board Vice-President LV Maine

Literacy Volunteers of Maine is proud to announce **TURNING A NEW PAGE: CELEBRATING ADULT LITERACY IN MAINE**, our first annual evening of entertainment to benefit adult literacy. Please join us **Thursday, September 20** starting at 5:00 pm at the Abromson Community Education Center on the USM Portland campus as we present best-selling Maine authors, national literacy advocates, inspired readings, book signings, food, live music and a fast-paced auction.

Sponsored by The Mimi Foundation and UNUM, our program features

keynote speaker and former First Lady **Barbara Bush** and former Governor of Maine **Angus King**, as well as readings by **Monica Wood**, author of *Any Bitter Thing* and **Colin Woodard**, author of *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier*. Music will be performed by The Clam Flat Five. You will also hear directly from amazing adult learners and find out first-hand about the incredibly transformative power of literacy.

For over 35 years, LV Maine has successfully delivered on our promise to continually provide increased access to literacy services for Maine adults who wish to acquire or improve their skills. However, as the largest non-governmental organization serving adult learners in Maine, we have much great work ahead of us before we can declare the battle won. --*Turning a New Page continues page 4*

**Turning a New Page:
CELEBRATING
Adult Literacy
in Maine**

A benefit for Literacy Volunteers of Maine

Thursday, September 20, 2007
Abromson Community Education Center at USM Portland campus

Patron sponsors
The Mimi Foundation
Unum

Reception with the Authors
5:00-6:30 pm

- Refreshments & Appetizers
- Music by The Clam Flat Five

Readings and Live Auction
6:30-8:00 pm

- Angus King, Master of Ceremonies
- Barbara Bush, Keynote Speaker
- Monica Wood,
Author of ANY BITTER THING
- Colin Woodard,
Author of THE LOBSTER COAST
- Student Reflections

Tickets
RECEPTION, READINGS & AUCTION \$50
READINGS & AUCTION \$25

Available at:

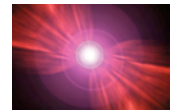
- Bookland, Brunswick
- Books Etc, Portland & Falmouth
- Longfellow Books, Portland
- Nonesuch Books, South Portland & Saco
- USM 207.780.5951
- www.lvmaine.org/events.htm

INSIDE

New Leadership for LV Maine
We're Turning a New Page!
LV Affiliates Gain Major Grants

LV SPOTLIGHTS

Volunteers, learners, donors, affiliates and programs that contribute to our LV Family



LV Bangor Receives Barbara Bush Foundation Family Literacy Grant through Maine Family Literacy Initiative

On June 19, literacy advocate **Barbara Bush** announced that the **Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy** awarded \$234,995 to **Maine Family Literacy Initiative** (MEFLI) programs in fifteen Maine communities. **Literacy Volunteers of Bangor** was one of eight grantees to receive \$25,000 for *Voices in Diversity*:



Ben Smith accepts affiliate grant from Barbara Bush

Parents and Children Celebrating Literacy, a partnership between the LV affiliate and **Penquis Community Action Program**. This substantial grant will allow the partnership program to expand its services to include cultural activities and the important role of native language literacy for English Language Learners.

Ben Smith, LV Bangor board president, accepted his affiliate's award from Mrs. Bush during a ceremony at the J. Richard Martin Community Center in Biddeford. With State Director of Adult Education **Rebecca Dyer** leading the event proceedings, Maine's First Lady **Karen Baldacci** commended Mrs. Bush for her dedication to increasing family literacy. Seven \$5,000 literacy planning grants were also awarded.

Alongside its award to MEFLI, the Barbara Bush Foundation (www.barbarabushfoundation.com) has granted nearly \$30 million to over 650 family literacy programs nationwide. As Honorary Chairperson of the Foundation, Mrs. Bush said, "We know that thousands of parents and children are now able to share the pleasure as well as the benefits of reading as a result of their hard work in the 166 family literacy programs funded by the Maine Family Literacy Initiative so far."

Mrs. Bush will be the keynote speaker at LV Maine's fundraiser, **TURNING A NEW PAGE: CELEBRATING ADULT LITERACY IN MAINE**. See story, pages 1 and 4.

Sponsors Boost LV Maine Annual Stars in Literacy Celebration

Generous community and corporate sponsors demonstrate their commitment to literacy by contributing to the success of so many LV Maine programs and services. The 2007 Annual Meeting *Stars In Literacy Celebration* was no exception. An important recognition of literacy learners, tutors and staff throughout the state, this year's event took place the evening of May 2nd at the **Glickman Library** of the University of Southern Maine in Portland.

Thanks to three major sponsors, this night was made all the more special. We are grateful to **E. Michael Brady**, Professor of Adult Education at The University of Southern Maine and former LV Maine Board member, for facilitating the Glickman Library as the host location. **The Offices of Joe Bornstein** helped underwrite the cost of the evening, and **Michael Payne**, General Manager of the **Doubletree Hotel** of Portland donated rooms for affiliates who traveled from far-reaches of the state to attend the celebration honors. We thank all of our sponsors for their tremendous support.



LV Waterville Area Gains Office and Sets up Tutor Trainings, Thanks to United Way of Mid-Maine



While many of us take working in an office for granted, it is no small feat for many nonprofits to acquire good operational space. Such is the case for **Literacy Volunteers -- Waterville** area, which, up until now, has had no centralized office. Due to the generosity of **United Way of Mid-Maine**, LV Waterville is setting up digs in a new office on Kennedy Memorial Drive.

Judy Larson, LV Waterville board co-president, reports more exciting news for the community, with the establishment of tutor trainings. “We are planning our first tutor training this fall with monies we received from a United Way mini-grant.”

Jenny Small of Literacy Volunteers of Greater Augusta will lend her skills as the certified tutor trainer for LV Waterville, a sharing opportunity for which Judy and her affiliate are most grateful. She adds, “We would like to thank United Way of Mid-Maine for their generous donation of funds and support to be able to have this tutor training session for interested volunteers in our area.”

LV Waterville will conduct a tutor training orientation on Wednesday, **October 10**, from **5:30 to 8:00 pm**. The actual trainings will run two consecutive Saturdays: **October 13 and 20**, from **9:00 am to 3:00 pm**. For more information on training locations and how to become a tutor with LV Waterville area, call **207-873-7786**.

“ We thank United Way of Mid-Maine for their generous donation of funds and support to have this tutor training for volunteers in our area.”

- Judy Larson, LV Waterville

Rain No Bar to Home Run for LV Maine and the Portland Sea Dogs

LV Maine partnered again with the **Portland Sea Dogs** for a fun-packed book give-away on July 15. *Quidditch Through the Ages* was distributed to 1,000 families who attended the game between the Sea Dogs and **New Britain**. LV Maine and affiliate board members, staff and volunteers handed out miles of smiles with the entertaining book by **Kennilworthy Whisp**, pseudonym of *Harry Potter* author **J. K. Rowling**.

An added bonus was hidden in several books, with coupons for the last *Harry Potter* release, or vouchers to attend *MuggleFest Portland* and LV Maine’s benefit **TURNING A NEW PAGE: CELEBRATING ADULT LITERACY IN MAINE**. Yet another surprise came in the form of soggy weather. To the great disappointment of the crowd, torrents of rain cancelled the afternoon game. Before the game was actually called, **Sarah Robinson**, LV Maine Executive Director, was interviewed on the radio by Sea Dogs game announcer **Mike Antonellis**, and Sarah pitched a series of hits for the great work of our Literacy Volunteers of Maine network! Despite the rain, it was a great morning of fun and festivities.

We thank **Liz Riley** of the Portland Sea Dogs for her extraordinary help organizing the event, and for donating game tickets to LV Maine for our affiliates.

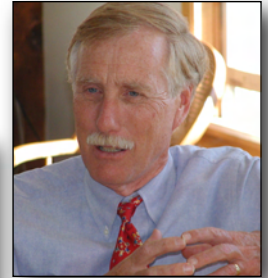
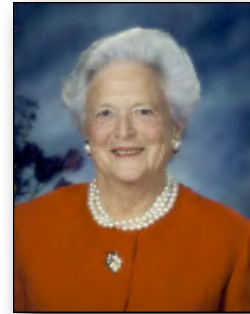


TURNING A NEW PAGE Features Angus King, Barbara Bush, Authors Monica Wood and Colin Woodard, plus Inspiring Learners!

continued from front page

In our ongoing work to help adults access literacy learning services, here is a snapshot that illustrates some of the challenges and opportunities ahead of us:

- 150,000 adults in Maine operate at the lowest level of literacy
- 70% of Maine's inmates operate at the lowest level of literacy
- 400,000 Maine adults would benefit from literacy assistance
- 944 adult learners were served by the Literacy Volunteers Network last year by 1,037 volunteer tutors providing 62,800 hours of their own time, valued at \$1.1 million
- A study by McKinsey shows that every \$1.00 spent on Literacy Volunteers actually delivers \$33.00 of benefit to the community



Your ticket purchase for TURNING A NEW PAGE will benefit the LV affiliate network throughout Maine by helping ensure that we can reach the hundreds of thousands of neighbors who need our help. Come and celebrate the achievements of so many brave adult

learners and their dedicated tutors on September 20th! Tickets are \$50 for the entire program, including a special author reception, music, great food and refreshments, readings and the auction; or \$25 for the readings and auction portion of the evening. Tickets are available at many area bookstores or through the LV Maine website at <http://www.lvmaine.org/events.htm>.

To learn more about LV Maine and TURNING A NEW PAGE: CELEBRATING ADULT LITERACY IN MAINE, please visit www.lvmaine.org or call 207-773-3191. If you are unable to attend the event, please consider making a donation through our website or mail it to our postal address listed on the back of this newsletter. We hope to see you at the Abromson Center when we Turn a New Page on adult literacy in Maine!

LV Maine Health Literacy Update

Literacy Volunteers of Maine is currently working with the **Sacopee Valley Health Center** (SVHC) in Porter to develop reader-friendly health literacy brochures. This collaboration is in conjunction with a **Maine Health Access Foundation** grant received by the Health Center. **Abbie Embry Turner** of LV Maine recently met with a focus group of SVHC patients in the Porter area to discuss content and design for the brochure. The materials will be designed to assist patients in managing their prescription medications. For more information, contact abbie@lvmaine.org.



LV Affiliates: Request for Proposals for Stella Grants

Sarah Robinson, Executive Director LV Maine

The process for RFPs is underway for LV Maine's *Stella Grants*, to be awarded to affiliates to help fund capacity-building projects. Please submit a summary of your affiliate's strategic initiative or project, such as: student outreach, purchase of assessment materials and training, board strategic planning, or other initiatives to advance ProLiteracy affiliate accreditation. Your one-to-two-page summary must include:

*Budget summary, including other funding sources secured or that you will be seeking;

*Amount being requested, from \$500-\$1000.

**Submit request
letters for
Stella Grants by
October 15.**

Your letter of request must be submitted by October 15. Affiliates will be notified by December 1. For more information on the application process, please contact sarah@lvmaine.org or call **207-773-3191**.

LV Maine Calendar and Upcoming Affiliate Events

LV Mid-Coast Maine -- September 15: Farnsworth Art Museum, Out CAST Players will work with a series of Wyeth paintings. November 4: Strand Theater, Rockland "The Magic of Literacy" with The Great Blindini, children's storytelling, musical acts, image theater performance by Out CAST Players. FMI: **207-594-5154**.

LV Androscoggin -- September 15 and 22: Volunteer Tutor Training Workshops, 9:00 am -- 3:00 pm. Registration required. Call Tahlia or Sally **207-753-1772**.

Turning a New Page: Celebrating Adult Literacy in Maine -- September 20 benefit for LV affiliates: USM Abromson Community Center, 5:00 -- 8:00 pm. FMI and to purchase tickets, <http://www.lvmaine.org/events.htm> or **207-773-3191**.

LV Greater Augusta and LV Waterville Area -- October 10: Winslow Library, Joint Volunteer Tutor Training Orientation, 5:30 -- 8:00 pm. October 13 and 20: Basic Tutor Trainings. **207-873-7786** or **207-626-3440**.

LV Maine Beyond The Page Winter Newsletter Deadline -- October 29: e-mail elaine@lvmaine.org with submissions up to 150 words and jpg or tiff photos.

LV Maine Fall Regional Meeting -- November 1: Freeport Community Center, 10:00 am -- 2:00 pm. FMI and to register info@lvmaine.org or **207-773-3191**.



Illiteracy in America

by Leigh Donaldson. Reprinted and edited to fit by permission. This article appeared in the July 9, 2007 Portland Press Herald.

Imagine living a life without being able to read traffic signs, an election ballot, a prescription medical label. What would it be like not to understand a bus schedule, read a newspaper or magazine article? How would you feel if you were unable to read a book to your young child?

Forty percent of American citizens have serious problems reading and writing these simple things that many of us take for granted. It's getting worse if we consider the fact that the United States ranks 49th (and rising) among more than 150 United Nations members in its literacy rate.

Why should we be concerned, if I must ask? Start with the undeniable fact that literacy skills are increasingly important, especially in the workplace. If you can't read, how can you expect to be effective in any job? How can you effectively interact with co-workers?

Just being unable to read and write is too simple a definition of illiteracy. It also involves being unaware of a particular subject or field of thought. It means you often feel inferior in many everyday conversations that might involve something someone read. It can mean becoming more of an outsider in an already divided world.

Indeed, illiteracy has been a tool to oppress people throughout history. In U.S. slavery times, it was illegal in many regions to teach slaves to read and write. In feudal society, the ability to read and write was mostly the privilege of the clergy and aristocracy. Illiteracy was not perceived as a problem until the end of the 14th century.

In 1930, the U.S. Census defined *illiterate* as a person over ten years of age who was unable to read and write in any language. In the 1940s, the dubious concept of *functional illiterate* was adopted and any person with less than 5 years of schooling was deemed unable to engage in social activities that involved talking with others.

That might have been taking it too far, for many who have trouble reading and writing develop ingenious ways of being undetected as non-readers. A friend who worked for over 30 years in the food service industry told me of a cook who would stand before the daily menu board in the kitchen for long minutes. He just stood there staring.



It finally occurred to my friend that the cook couldn't make out all the words for the daily workload. He then decided to loudly read off and point at each word, in an effort to help him get by. The cook was grateful and took his suggestion to attend a one-on-one private reading program.

The personal costs of not being able to read and write are tremendous. Let's start with not being able to experience the joy and knowledge gained from reading. The sad truth is that there is no such thing as a typical non-reader. They are everybody, including business people, college students, farmers, engineers, office clerks, nurse's aids, and military personnel. Non-readers can be any age, any ethnicity and gender. They can live in any type of neighborhood and community.

Illiteracy is thankfully not an ailment that can't be cured. But it costs billions in lost productivity and is linked to unemployment, crime, poverty and family problems. Businesses invest millions of dollars each year attempting to provide skills training for employees lacking basic reading and writing skills.

According to [Proliteracy America], with only 35 to 45 hours of tutoring, an adult can improve his or her reading skills by at least one grade level. Libraries, community colleges, churches, newspapers, businesses, voluntary organizations, employers, correctional institutions and community groups throughout the country work toward making a non-reader a reader.

What we bring to any experience in our life can only be enhanced by what we read. Being able to understand and embrace the written word is a gift, one that we all deserve. Ignorance is not bliss.

Leigh Donaldson is a regular columnist on national and international issues for the Portland Press Herald and the Progressive Media Project.

DO YOU?

Want to make a difference as a volunteer tutor? Know someone who might be helped with literacy services? Call Literacy Volunteers of Maine at 1-800-322-5455, or e-mail info@lvmaine.org



New Leadership Forges Ahead for LV Maine



In May, **Sarah Clayton Robinson** hit the ground running as the new Executive Director of LV Maine. The former Maine Donor Relations Director for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Sarah grew up in Pennsylvania, enjoying many summers with family in Aroostook County. Returning to Maine in 1989, she attended the University of New England where she took her first job in the Alumni Office. After completing her Masters Degree in Nonprofit Management, she held various positions at MBNA Credit Card Services in Camden, Belfast, Portland and Farmington. The nonprofit sector called her back when she worked on the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Portland's capital campaign. Sarah has volunteered as an elementary reading tutor, for Habitat for Humanity workdays with the Cathedral of St. Luke, and is a member of the New Girls Network through the Maine Women's Fund.

Sarah lives in Portland with her husband, Mike, a software sales recruiter, their young daughter Rachel, and Jasper, the family golden retriever. In her leisure, Sarah loves to garden, bike, run, sew, make jewelry and read, especially with Rachel. A main priority as Executive Director is to help reduce the waiting list among LV affiliates to receive tutoring services in Maine. She has begun doing this "through increased use of technology, expanding visibility of the network, and increas[ing] the dollars raised through LV Maine to assist with these efforts". Always seeking to expand relationships, Sarah is off to a great start working with LV affiliates, friends, and community partners, as well as "policy makers and donors to expand the incredible services that the network provides across Maine."

Changes at LV Greater Portland



Phyllis de Fano began her new role as Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Greater Portland (LVGP) in June, having arrived from Ithaca, New York as an English as a Second Language Coordinator. She holds a degree in English and Education, and a Master's in Library Science. With a varied background in university administration, teaching middle school, adult education, publishing and library work, Phyllis has over 20 years experience as a Literacy Volunteer tutor in Adult Basic Education and ESOL. "Literacy Volunteers has been my avocation," she affirms. "I found volunteering where there is such great need personally deeply rewarding, and making that my career even more so. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to continue that commitment with LVGP." Phyllis replaced former Director **Kristen Stevens**, who spent the summer in Namibia, Africa working for Khomas Women in Development, a ProLiteracy affiliate that provides workforce literacy skills to women in transition.

Phyllis de Fano, Executive Director, LV Greater Portland

BEYOND THE PAGE

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Published by Literacy Volunteers of Maine
142 High Street, Suite 526
Portland, ME 04101
207.773.3191. www.lvmaine.org

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Newsletter Editor and
Communications Program Coordinator: Elaine Tselikis
Curriculum Program Coordinator: Abbie Embry Turner

HOW TO SUBMIT NEWS ITEMS

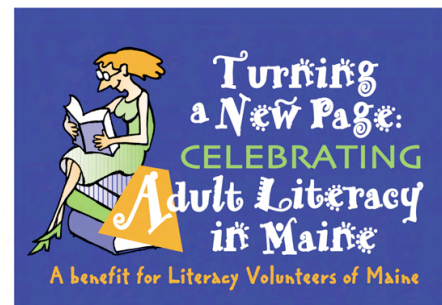
E-mail articles up to 150 words directly to the editor, elaine@lvmaine.org with "Newsletter Item" in the subject line of the e-mail message. Attach jpg or tiff format photographs if desired.

DEADLINE FOR WINTER ISSUE

Monday, October 29

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