

# BEYOND THE PAGE



ADVOCACY . NETWORKING . EDUCATION

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF MAINE . APRIL -- JUNE 2008

## JOURNEY OF A LITERACY WARRIOR

*Shannon M. Parker, Board Member LV Maine*

Over six years ago, **Lottie** bravely walked into the **MidCoast Adult Learning Center** in Rockland with a determined goal: to learn how to read. With guidance from the Center's Director, Lottie created her own educational plan and was matched with a tutor from **Literacy Volunteers**. Lottie wanted to fulfill her lifelong dream of going to college, yet she was reading at the first grade level. However, what she lacked in literacy skills, she made up for in life experience.

Before becoming a literacy learner, Lottie had dedicated many of her 60 years to the United States Army, touring extensively as part of her duties. Her quick wit, willingness to engage in conversation and proud eyes served as magnets, drawing friends in close to her wherever she traveled. It wasn't until her retirement from the service when she made the most difficult

journey of her life that started with her admission she could no longer read after sustaining a brain injury.

Lottie immediately became a permanent fixture at the Midcoast Learning Center. Within four years of working with a tutor, she was reading at the tenth grade level. Her enthusiasm for learning continued to swell and **Literacy Volunteers MidCoast Maine** Director, **Beth A. Gifford**, suggested

Lottie further her path to post-secondary education. Given the unique partnership between LV Midcoast and **MSAD#5 Adult and Community Education**, Lottie enrolled in the district's free College Transition Program.

Lottie was the first one to speak on the initial day of College Transition class, claiming she



wasn't good enough for the program; wouldn't get to college; didn't know why she was in the class. Lottie was vocal, always willing to speak her concerns, furnish praise, or demand clarification; it was the way she negotiated her world before she could read. She soon learned the skills to prepare for college and took to computer classes as much as the academic.

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People and affiliates that contribute to our LV Family



## Literacy Warrior *continued from front page*

Lottie was already charting her path to distance learning and knew she needed computer skills to take the online classes that so fascinated her. Because of her success working with Literacy Volunteers and Adult Education, Lottie is now pursuing a degree in Accounting at **Kennebec Valley Community College** (KVCC). She has also returned to Adult Education for Word and Excel classes to ensure she stays current in her classwork at KVCC.

In addition to all of her academic commitments, she has found time to be a voice for adult learners across the State. Lottie received two letters in March 2008, one from **Congressman Tom Allen** and another from **Senator Susan M. Collins**, expressing their respective thanks for sharing her unique story of transition, education and achievement. Although Lottie first came to the Learning Center to learn to *read*, she moved through adult education to gain a *voice*; a voice that we all benefit from.

Lottie's gratitude for her education and her quality of life can be witnessed in the numerous ways she helps others. She has returned to the MidCoast Adult Learning Center to help a literacy student live a healthy life. Like Lottie, the student is diabetic so Lottie mentors the woman on how to prepare healthy meals. At an age when most men and women in our country retire to a less complicated life, Lottie's every pursuit serves as a reminder that nourishment is essential for

body and mind, and that one act of kindness or bravery can come back to each of us one hundredfold.



*Serving on the Literacy Volunteers of Maine Board, Shannon M. Parker is Director for MSAD #5 Rockland Adult Education.*

## Stars in Literacy Shine Brightly

The courageous spirit of learning was showcased at the **LV Maine Stars in Literacy Celebration and Annual Meeting**, held May 7 at the **Glickman Family Library** on the **USM Portland** campus. **Brian Deveaux**, outgoing LV Maine Board President, welcomed over 60 affiliate staff, volunteers and adult LV students to the festivities, which included dinner, dessert and a performance by Maine author and humorist, **John McDonald**.

Recognizing the unique relationship and successes of student/tutor pairs is what this remarkable evening is all about. It is no small task to maintain a dry eye with the moving stories and



testimonials of women and men who are driven to overcome great obstacles, work incredibly hard and advance their independence through literacy

and learning. This year, ten affiliates nominated student/tutor pairs for awards.

We also honor administrative volunteers and those who demonstrate outstanding leadership to the cause of literacy: **Richard Martineau** won the *Agnes T. Beckwith Award* and **Carole Brand** and **Benjamin Smith** each won the *Lorrayne Carroll Award*.

*Above: Qi Ming Huang with tutor Colleen Sanders and his wife Ying Yu. Right: Sally Ashworth with tutor Marilyn Earle. -- Kristen Stevens photos*





## York County Community College Awards LV Greater Sanford Student Scholarship

*Amy Safford, Executive Director LV Greater Sanford*

On April 29, at the **LV Greater Sanford** Annual Meeting, there was a wonderful surprise at the end of the evening when **Dr. Charles Lyons**, President of **York County Community College**, stood up and offered a free scholarship to one LV-GS student for the upcoming academic year. After hearing all the testimonials and student awards, he was so touched by the milestones learners had achieved and barriers they had overcome, he made the announcement without any warning.

“The only requirement is that a student has his or her high school diploma or GED,” he said.

The LV Sanford Board plans to form a YCCC Scholarship Subcommittee to review applications from interested students. The student must be enrolled full-time at LV-GS and meet with his or her tutor on a regular weekly basis.

**Metrocast Cablevision** taped the Annual Meeting, and video technician **Tim Cremen**, summed up the program best:

“The whole night was great, but the scholarship announcement at the end restored my belief in humanity.”

We agree, Tim. Thank you, Dr. Lyons, and all the people at York County Community College!



*Dr. Charles M. Lyons,  
President York County  
Community College*

## LV Maine Staff Notes

**Sarah Robinson**, Executive Director, wrote an article for the May issue of *The State Voter*, newsletter of **League of Women Voters of Maine (LWME)**. The article discusses the **EASY TO READ VOTER GUIDE** which LV Maine will be producing this fall in partnership with LWVME, to help people with low literacy skills understand voting and participate in this year’s national and state election process. *For more about the voter guide, turn to page 4.*

On May 15, **Elaine Tselikis**, Director of Communications and Educational Outreach, participated in the **Greater Portland United Way Day of Caring/Heart of Sharing**. This year’s event was co-sponsored by the **Maine Public Relations Council**, of which Elaine is a member. Specialists in communications, marketing, writing and graphic design were called upon to offer advice to a host of area nonprofits that signed up for free consultations.

Also in May, **Kathy Kilrain del Rio** joined the staff as Community Project Coordinator. With a BA in History and Secondary Education, she has worked over ten years in the educational and nonprofit fields. Originally from New York, Kathy was a teacher and board member of a prominent Brooklyn charter school. *Read more on page 7.*

**Visit LV Greater Sanford on the web:**  
[www.sanfordliteracy.org](http://www.sanfordliteracy.org)

**For more information on York County  
Community College:** [www.yccc.edu](http://www.yccc.edu)

# LV NETWORK NEWS

Local, state and national news and resources for our affiliates



## LV Maine Partners with League of Women Voters of Maine for Easy to Read Voter Guide

Sarah Robinson, Executive Director LV Maine



LV Maine is excited to be partnering with the **League of Women Voters of Maine (LWVME)** to produce the first Maine **EASY TO**

**READ VOTER GUIDE.** Before the November general election, we plan to design and print up to 15,000 copies of this non-partisan guide that will explain key aspects of the voting process, including registering, absentee ballots, voting, political parties, going to the polls, the presidential race, statewide legislative races and statewide ballots or bond issues.

**One in seven Maine adults cannot read this sentence.** Filling out a job application, understanding a prescription label or registering to vote are tough challenges for the 150,000 Mainers who function at the lowest level of literacy. In our effort to help our neighbors find their voice at the polls, we aim to structure our **EASY TO READ VOTER GUIDE** text at or below a fifth grade reading level.

The LV Maine Board is committed to student and volunteer outreach, and certainly during this year's presidential election. **Literacy Volunteers of Bangor** has actively encouraged learners to increase civic engagement through self-advocacy, registering and voting. The voter guide project is a perfect progression of action for LV Maine to spearhead.

In addition to statewide physical distribution points this fall, the voter guide will be posted on the LV Maine and LWVME websites. For more information, contact me, [sarah@lvmaine.org](mailto:sarah@lvmaine.org), or visit the LWVME website: [www.lwvme.org](http://www.lwvme.org)

## Signup Going Well for LV Maine's First Summer Tutor Training

Elaine Tselikis, Director of Communications and Educational Outreach

The response to our call for volunteer tutors in Southern Maine has been greater than expected through word of mouth, our **LV Maine E-Update** post to our affiliates and friends, this newsletter, and through our adult education partners, to name a few.

Our first summer Regional Tutor Training will be held in Scarborough July 21, 23, 28 and 30, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. We are most grateful to **MaineHealth** for their tremendous generosity in



donating the use of a training classroom in their Scarborough Learning Resource Center.

This Tutor Training presents a new model which we are piloting for our affiliate network to augment separate trainings for Basic Literacy (BL) and English Speakers for Other Languages (ESOL). Whereas those separate trainings can tally up to 40 hours spanning several weeks, this new 20-hour, 4-day accelerated program will enable volunteers to become certified LV tutors equipped to work with Basic Literacy or ESOL adults in our statewide affiliate offices. This streamlined training is aimed to better meet the schedules and flexibility of today's busy volunteers. Separate BL and ESOL trainings will remain available to meet individual affiliate and community needs.

Our July training team is comprised of **Sarah Robinson, Elaine Tselikis, Kristen Stevens** and **Katherine Kilrain del Rio**. For more information on this or future Regional Tutor Trainings, contact LV Maine, **207-773-3191** or [info@lvmaine.org](mailto:info@lvmaine.org).



## LV Maine Calendar and Upcoming Events: July through November 2008

- July 15-17 **TRAIN THE TRAINER.** 9 am--3 pm. Freeport Community Library, hosted by LV Maine. Tue--Thu Facilitated by Roberta Reiss of the Literacy Coalition of Florida.
- July 21, 23 **LV MAINE REGIONAL TUTOR TRAINING.** 9 am--3 pm. 100 MaineHealth Campus, Scarborough. Facilitated by Sarah Robinson, Elaine Tselikis, Kristen Stevens and Katherine Mon & Wed Kilrain del Rio. For volunteers who want to tutor adults in Basic Reading or English Speakers of Other Languages. FMI [elaine@lvmaine.org](mailto:elaine@lvmaine.org) or call 773-3191.
- Aug 14 **FAMILY LITERACY DAY WITH PORTLAND SEA DOGS.** Noon game. Hadlock Field, Thursday Portland. LV Maine partners with The Sea Dogs and Volunteers of America of Northern New England. Gates open at 10:30 for thousands of new FREE book give-aways!
- October 6 **EASY TO READ VOTER GUIDE** distribution begins, a partnership project between LV Maine Monday and League of Women Voters of Maine. FMI: Sarah Robinson [sarah@lvmaine.org](mailto:sarah@lvmaine.org) or 773-3191.
- October 16-17 **MAINE ADULT EDUCATION CONFERENCE,** Grand Summit Hotel, Sunday River, Bethel. FMI: <http://www.maineadulted.org/conferences.html>.
- November 13 **LV MAINE FALL REGIONAL MEETING,** 10 am--2 pm. Chase Lounge, Bates College. Thursday RSVP October 28 to Sarah Robinson [sarah@lvmaine.org](mailto:sarah@lvmaine.org).

### Family Literacy Day with Portland Sea Dogs: Thursday, August 14



LV Maine is delighted to share our annual partnership with **The Portland Sea Dogs** for our *Family Literacy Day Celebration* with **Volunteers of America Northern New England** (VOANNE) for a major book give-away. The Sea Dogs will muscle up for an exciting 12:00 noon game against **Altoona Curve** (Pittsburgh Pirates).

When Hadlock Field gates open at 10:30 a.m., LV Maine and VOANNE will hand out 3,000 FREE books to families! These new children's books are

made possible through the **Scholastic Book Grants Program** with VOANNE. Come ring up your own grand slam by enjoying a great baseball game and sharing the gift of reading with your family!

As always, we thank The Portland Sea Dogs for their commitment to literacy. For ticket information and game schedules, visit their official website:

[www.portlandseadogs.com](http://www.portlandseadogs.com)

To learn more about Volunteers of America Northern New England: [www.voanne.org](http://www.voanne.org).

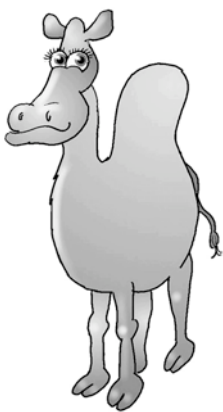




## What's On Your Reading Menu? Books to Share with New Readers

Sarah Robinson, Executive Director LV Maine

One of my New Year's resolutions in 2008 was to get trained as an LV tutor and be matched with an ESOL student. I wanted to stay connected with the incredible work that is being done by our 1,000 volunteers around the state. I was lucky to be matched with a **Portland Adult Education** student from Somalia. We are slowly working on increasing our conversation time and write back and forth to each other in a journal. In one of our first conversations, I asked my student what she liked to eat: she does not like American food and misses eating camel meat and drinking camel milk.

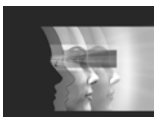


Her story stuck with me and I remembered a beautiful book that my daughter had received as a gift, entitled ***HOW THE CAMEL GOT HIS HUMP*** by **Rudyard Kipling**. The information I received from the **REAL** Training (Reading Essentials for Adult Literacy) by **Evelyn Beaulieu** helped me review the book from the perspective of selecting quality literature for adults, keeping in mind REAL factors: accuracy, style, organization, design, readability and content. My concern was that if my student would find the topic relevant and she would have an understanding of the location, the topic would be adult-focused. The book is written at a grade 2-4 level, so I realized there would be words she would not know, which we actually used as vocabulary builders for our following meetings.

The tale is about a camel that has no interest in working and leaves the other animals to do all the chores. His response when asked to work is "Humph!" Eventually, the Djinn who is in charge of all the deserts comes and sets the camel straight by telling the camel if he says Humph one more time he will live with the hump permanently. You can guess what happens next.

At first, my student was unsure about the story because she said camels are not lazy; in fact, they work very hard. I explained that it was a silly story. We read it again and she had lots of questions, and wrote about her own experience with camels using some new vocabulary she learned, such as *yoke*, *thorn* and *fetch*. It was a wonderful way to bridge the gap in language with a topic that was familiar to her. The one concept that was difficult to explain was *magic*. I recommend this book for anyone working with an ESOL student from a similar country or cultural background.

Also in May, while I was manning a booth at the **Maine Reads Festival of the Book**, author **Lynn Plourde** approached me about her newly published book, ***THE DUMP MAN'S TREASURES***. This story is written from an adult's perspective about a dump man who will not allow anyone to throw away books, and how he repairs them and lets anyone borrow or keep them. The dump man gets injured and the children bring him books to make him feel better. In a surprising turn, they discover that this kind man who treats books with such reverence cannot read! So, they all decide to help him learn. It is a meaningful story with beautiful illustrations that I think many of our ABE students would really enjoy.



## LV Maine Welcomes Marcia Cook to Board of Directors



**Marcia Cook** began her literacy career as a second grade teacher. After taking a few years off to raise her children, Scott, Mike and Laurie, she worked in a bookstore and returned to the **University of Maine** to earn a Master's Degree in Reading and Language Arts in 1991. Beginning

in 1986, she taught adult basic education classes at **Waterville Adult Education**, where she also taught adults in an Even Start Family Literacy program,

eventually becoming the Adult Basic Education Coordinator and GED Examiner. She later served as Director of **Franklin County Adult Basic Education** and **MSAD #9 Adult and Community Education Program**.

In 2001, Marcia joined the **Maine Department of Education** as an adult education consultant. She has been actively involved in *Equipped for the Future*, developing a plan for adults with learning disabilities, corrections education, and most recently, technology integration into teaching. She loves reading, singing, traveling, walking, hiking and spending time with her family. Her husband, Keith is a psychologist. We are honored to welcome Marcia to the LV Maine Board.

## Katherine Kilrain del Rio Joins LV Maine Staff



**Katherine Kilrain del Rio** is the new Community Project Coordinator for LV Maine. In our growing work to meet internal office and affiliate needs and address our broader community mission, we are happy Kathy will be applying her talents and perspectives to the

challenges at hand. Her schedule is part-time and she continues in her capacity as Executive Director of **LV Greater Saco/Biddeford**. Kathy formerly was the English for Speakers of Other Languages Teacher at **Gorham Adult Education**. She serves on the **New Girls Network** of the **Maine Women's Fund** and lives in Portland with her husband.

## Jo-Ellen Kelley Brought Major Achievements For LV Aroostook and Entire LV Network

It is with great emotion that the LV Network bestows our warmest wishes to **Jo-Ellen Kelley**, who leaves her position as **Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Aroostook County**. Under Jo-Ellen's vision and leadership, and her collaboration with LV Maine, LV Aroostook was established in 2005.

Jo-Ellen has worked tirelessly and creatively to grow the fledgling affiliate into a strong program that helps meet the literacy learning needs of adults in the community. She is guiding LV-Aroostook in the transition process to a new Director as she prepares to devote greater time to her family and pursue new projects. We honor her wonderful accomplishments and those of LV-Aroostook, and we will miss her, although we know Jo-Ellen will continue to advocate for the cause of literacy.

## BEYOND THE PAGE

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### HOW TO SUBMIT NEWS ITEMS

E-mail articles up to 150 words to [elaine@lvmaine.org](mailto:elaine@lvmaine.org)  
with "Newsletter Item" in the subject line of the e-mail  
message. Attach jpg or tiff digital photographs if desired.

### DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Thursday, July 31, 2008

## LV MAINE BOARD

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*Central to many recent discussions of literacy is the notion that writing and reading are ways of making, interpreting, and communicating meaning. -- Jerome Bruner, ACTS OF MEANING*

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