

Issue

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February 2004

Literacy Volunteers of Rochester

Rochester NY

Tutor
in
Touch

A newsletter edited by Barb Wainright, bwainright@usadatanet.net
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Long Time, No Newsletter

by Barb Wainright

Your editor apologizes for her extended absence. Since our last newsletter, autumn has turned to bleak winter. Some folks find winter a de-motivating time of year. But look at it this way: winter is a great time for indoor activities, like reading and conversing. All that summer fun is now a source of topics, not of distractions.

Feel like escaping the cold? When winter winds are howling and more snow shoveling is just too much, there is no faster escape than can be found in the pages of a well-chosen book. Your student's answer to the question "Where would you like to be right now?" can provide great new ideas for lesson materials and discussion topics.

Wintertime is Storytime

Michelle Bruzee, Tutor and Tutor Workshop Leader



February is a good month for writing stories. It is Black History month. February 14 is Valentine's Day, then later there is President's week. And this year is Leap Year. How would you celebrate your birthday each year if you were born on the 29th? For those of us who are loony, all the phases of the moon occur on Fridays this month. Usually the moon's phases are not so regular. How about a field trip? The George Eastman House is full of spring bulbs from now until 2/22. February offers many reasons to write. Snow, for example. How do you feel about snow now, and how does it differ from how you felt about snow when you were a child?

Stories can germinate in March too. Maybe it is time to remember a favorite garden, plan a new garden or learn garden words. Take a trip to the Conservatory in Highland Park. Search the Web for the history of St Patrick's Day, March 17. March 20 is the Vernal Equinox, two great vocabulary words for an event that signals the start of spring. Remember that March 22 is the Literacy Volunteers of Rochester fortieth birthday party, where more stories await you.

Idioms are for Sharing

I am snug as a bug in a rug inside my house, but ask me to go outside and I will be as slow as molasses in January. I will breathe a sigh of relief when I don't have to shovel snow anymore. Every one I know is going stir crazy. Cabin fever has set in. I would prefer spring fever. I've already started spring cleaning. I would even spring for some new summer clothes. My green thumb is just itching to get digging in the dirt. After all, spring is just around the corner and April showers bring May flowers. (But what do Mayflowers bring? Pilgrims!)

Do these idioms leave you feverish for more? You can find books full of them in the Literacy Volunteers library, carousel #9.

New! Drop-in Tutoring Center

We are now offering drop-in tutoring at the LVR office to meet the needs of students who are waiting to be matched. This is also an opportunity for tutors to do something a little different, or to continue to tutor when personal schedules might make it difficult. For more information or to volunteer, contact Mellissa Woodhams at 473-3030 or Mwoodhams@literacyrochester.org.

LVR Celebrates 40 Years!

Bob Mahar, Executive Director

LVR will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary on March 22, 2004. The event, which includes a reception and private screening of the film "Finding Forrester," will take place at the Dryden Theatre at the George Eastman House. More information about how you can get tickets or become a sponsor will be coming to you very soon in the mail. Please save the date!

Assessment, Assessment, My Kingdom for Assessment

When did you and your student last do an assessment? This year, the New York State Education department requires two assessments between 1/1/03 and 6/30/04. This 18-month window changes every year.

By doing the assessments that the State requires, you help insure that we get the funding we need to continue to serve our students.

How well prepared were you?

Did your tutor training workshop prepare you to work with your student? What do you wish you had learned, or learned more thoroughly? What suggestions do you have to improve training so it is directly applicable to your tutoring responsibilities?

Your feedback will help us improve LVR tutor workshops and offer useful in-service programs. All feedback you provide will be confidential. Please send your suggestions to Judy Emerson, JEmerson@literacyrochester.org. Or call Judy at 473-3030. Thank you!

Literacy Computers

Mike Carnahan, Tutor and Tutor Workshop Leader

There are at least two libraries in Rochester (Greece and Arnett) that have literacy computers. They have worked really well for my student and myself. The basic operation: You provide the reading material, and scan it into the computer. The computer selects and crops to the section of text. NOW HERE IS THE REALLY NEAT PART: The computer highlights a paragraph then super highlights each word as it reads through headphones. The pronunciation is good. It can handle hyphenated words and numbers.

The first time we used it I set it up for my student. The second time I told my student that he would have to ask the librarian to let him use it, and I would be right behind him. The next time I gave him higher level material (about Magic Johnson) and told him that his home work was to have had it read by the computer.

The next time we got together he said that it was more convenient for him to use the computer at the Arnett library. I'm so proud.

Tutor Tips



What works for you? How did you help your student through a recent difficulty? Let us know so we can share your idea with fellow tutors who may benefit from your experience.

Describe your tutor tip in a few paragraphs and send it to the editor, Barb Wainright, email address bwainright@bluefrog.com. Be sure to include your full name and phone

number so we can reach you for clarification, if necessary. You can also mail your tutor tip to:

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Send comments, suggestions, and ideas for future newsletter topics to either of these addresses, as well.

Online Resources for Celebrating Black History Month

From Teacher magazine

The Internet has a number of sites dedicated to the celebration of Black History Month. These black history and culture Web sites offer everything from lesson plans and timelines to educational games and historical photos.

The Library of Congress site www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html features the library's 'Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture.' Another informative guide to black history is the Encyclopaedia Britannica Web site search.eb.com/blackhistory/. On that site, you'll find a black history study guide, including a guide for teachers, and the biographies of close to 300 distinguished African-Americans.

Other informative sites include

- www.gale.com/free_resources/bhm/, which includes a Black History

Month quiz

- www.blackquest.com/link.htm
- www.infoplease.com/spot/bhm1.html
- www.internet4classrooms.com/black_history.htm

New Courses Available

From Verizon Literacy University

Two new courses have been added to Verizon Literacy University in the last few weeks.

"Citizenship: What Volunteers Need to Know", launched at the end of December, outlines the process for becoming a U.S. citizen and helps volunteers and tutors locate citizenship resources in their community. This course also provides information to inform the decisions about starting a citizenship course in a literacy program.

"Culture and English Language Learners" examines different dimensions of culture relevant to the learning context, including both the personal cultures of learners and educators, and the culture of the larger social political environment. It explores how cultural values influence instruction and looks at several teaching approaches that take culture into account.

Both of these courses provide important background information for those new to working with literacy students and for program staff who wish to expand and enrich their programs.

Check out <http://www.vluonline.org/course/index.asp> to view all the courses now available on Verizon Literacy University.

Calendar of Events

March 3, Wednesday evening: Beginning of Basic Workshop with Marcia Nabut at LVR office

March 6, 2 pm: Tutor Chat at The Spot coffee shop, 200 East Avenue

March 18, Thursday evening: Beginning of Condensed ESOL for certified Teachers with Edline Chun and George-Ann Schaufele

Monday evening March 22: LVR 40th birthday party at the Dryden Theater, George Eastman House, Reception at 6:45, History at 7:30-8:00, Movie at 8:00

April 9 and 10, Friday and Saturday: Office closed

Note the new date! April 27, Tuesday evening: Spring Conference. Send ideas for topics to Judy Emerson, Jemerson@literacyrochester.org