

Message from the Executive Director

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”

— Mark Twain, THE INNOCENTS ABROAD/ROUGHING IT

The warm weather will soon be here to stay. I'm looking forward to July and August when I may get some time to travel.

Whenever I go to new places, I try to chat with locals. You never know what you will find out.

In the Bahamas, I noticed that most of the restaurant managers were women. I asked a manager if Bahamians value women in leadership. She said that the country has a policy of employing “Bahamians First.” It encourages men to get jobs but there is a high rate of alcoholism among men so you see more women rising in the ranks. I got the distinct impression that the woman would be happy to see more men in management if it meant that she could get off her feet for a few hours each day. ☺

In New Zealand, I asked about wages. A kiwi told me that high salaries are not widely valued. Citizens most value their physical health and the environment. Several people told me that they would rather work for a reasonable wage and enjoy a low-stress life than make a lot of money. It certainly made my trip pleasant to tour with a guide who was enjoying life rather than rushing from one spot to another.

I don't get to travel often so I take a respite by chatting with our students every now and then. The result of one conversation is an article about the Lunar New Year, which is included in this newsletter. Hopefully, we will be able to add more “Learning from our Students” articles in the future.

In the meantime, we hope you will put your feet up and explore the newsletter. Maybe you will learn something new about LVFV.



Peg Coker, Executive Director

UPCOMING EVENTS

TUTOR TRAINING

MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS
JULY 9, 11, 16, 18
6:30PM TO 9:00PM
ST. CHARLES PUBLIC LIBRARY

TUTOR TRAINING

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS
AUGUST 7, 9, 14, AND 16
6:30PM TO 9:00PM
ST. CHARLES PUBLIC LIBRARY

TUTOR TRAINING

MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS
SEPTEMBER 10, 12, 17, AND 19
6:30PM TO 9:00PM
ST. CHARLES PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Learn how the
Lunar New Year
is celebrated on page 4!

Trivia Bee for Literacy Gets the Travel Bug

“Oh my! I enjoyed being at the Bee again!” said volunteer Liz Prignano as she summed up The Trivia Bee for Literacy, our biggest fundraiser of the year. It was held on Saturday, March 24 at FONA International, Inc. in Geneva.

The event featured an international travel theme. FONA’s beautiful floor to ceiling windows look out on one of DuPage Airport’s flight paths. It was easy for the decorating team to transform FONA into an airport terminal.

Participants got into the theme by inventing quirky team names, dressing in travel gear, and toting carry-on luggage. “Fanny Pack Your Bags” from Town House Books & Café won the prize for team spirit by donning Hawaiian shirts, sunshades, and binoculars. “AirBeeNBees” from Hosanna! Lutheran Church won the prize for the most creative team name. “I gotta say that we LOVE seeing how each year’s theme plays into the entire presentation,” said Chris Denault from “Bugs Fly Free” sponsored by Nameplate and Panel Technology of Carol Stream, “you guys knock it out of the park each year.”



Thanks to FONA International Inc. in Geneva for hosting The Trivia Bee for Literacy!

Photo credit: Martin Pinnau Photography

Frequent flyers such as “Choo Choo Mamas” from Altrusa International Fox Valley and “The BermUUDA Triangle” from Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva matched wits with new teams from the Aurora Police Department, Geneva Lions Club, and Geneva Women’s Club. “The Three Estuches Airlines” from L.E.M. Cleaning Services, the “Wanna-Bees” sponsored by Jim Roberts, and “Fanny Pack Your Bags” from Town House Books & Café also competed for the first time. A total of 32 teams got on board hoping to capture the championship.

It was non-stop action during the first round. Most teams knew the Griswold family's ultimate destination in the movie "National Lampoon's Vacation" (Walley World) and which sport uses a shuttlecock (badminton). There was a little turbulence in round two when only 47% of the teams could identify the language from which English acquired the words kumquat, gung-ho, and ketchup (Chinese). Only 38% knew whether British dishes Bubble & Squeak, Toad in the Hole, or Bangers and Mash contained sausages (Bubble & Squeak). “To me, the questions seemed just right, some hard, some very easy – just as I’d expect,” said volunteer Linda Jones.

After answering 50 questions in regular play, four teams headed to the tie-breaker rounds to face questions like “Which four German immigrants brought their beer-making skills from the old country and became the beer barons of Milwaukee during the 1800s?” (Frederick Miller, Joseph Schlitz, Fredrick Pabst, Valentin Blatz) and “What are the names of the four railroads from the original version of Monopoly?” (Reading, Pennsylvania, B&O, and Short Line).

In the end, “Know-it-Owls” from Batavia Public Library sponsored by Friends of the Batavia Public Library landed in first place. Second place went to “Circulating the Globe,” a team of Circulation Department employees from the St. Charles Public Library sponsored by Friends of the St. Charles Public Library. Third place went to “Where in the Ever-lovin’ Blue-eyed World” from Geneva Public Library sponsored by the Friends of the Geneva Public Library.

The event raised about \$21,500 for literacy. Supporting the effort were sponsors Altrusa International Fox Valley and FONA International, Inc. Refreshments were provided by The Fresh Market and RXBAR. Design/branding was provided by Pam Bierman, DesignerPapers.com, and Cooper Hong Inc. Winner trophies and prizes were provided by South Elgin

Budokan Martial Arts and Fitness, Strohschein Law Group LLC, Penniall Family Dental, St. Charles Dairy Queen, Classic Cinemas, and Zonta Club of St. Charles, Geneva, Batavia. Printing was provided by Batavia Instant Print.

“I had a great time, as always,” said Ken Celic of “AirBeeNBees” from Hosanna! Lutheran Church, “Your homework for next year is to come up with more questions that our team can answer, but that will befuddle all the other teams. What could be easier?”

We’re on it, Ken!



Photo credit: Martin Pinnau Photography

Our Volunteer Corps Continues to Grow

Congratulations to the volunteers who were certified as tutors this spring:

Heather Bailey
Samantha Cocroft
Susan Crocker
Margaret Dawn
Kayla Dusing
Linda Ferguson
Linnea Funk
Aarie Glas
Brenda Granados
Kirsten Grebel
Shane Grebel
Rick Grossert
Melba Gustafson
Julie Hepker

Julia Hugee-Pedersen
Jim Kimberly
Taylor Kincer
Amy Lipinski
Dick MacFeely
Ellie MacFeely
Sara Mackh
Dottie Mantsch
Paul Mantisch
Edward Marth
John Martzel
Dalila McClure
Art Miller
Hannah Mills-Fee

Deborah Newsam
Ellen Odom
Mary Ann Patzer
Karla Poremba
Jim Roberts
Meg Romberg
Nancy Smith
Melinda Snyder
Teri Spiers
Colleen Warfield
Odie Washington
Pamela Williams
Cari Williams
Dave Wykoff

Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year

During our student spotlight interview, Tannie Doan mentioned the Vietnamese new year. Tet Nguyen Dan, usually shortened to Tet, is the biggest and most popular festival of the year in Vietnam. In English it is translated to “the Feast of the First Morning of the First Day.” It marks the arrival of spring and falls in late January or early February. Vietnamese people usually return to their families during Tet so they can celebrate together.

Learning from Our Students



Tet Kumquat Tree in the lobby of the Sunway Hotel in Hanoi.

Tet is not a day, but several days of celebration. Vietnamese people will prepare for Tet one to two weeks in advance, cleaning their homes to sweep away the bad luck of the old year. People believe that what they do on the dawn of Tet will determine their fate all year so they try to pay all their debts and resolve all arguments.

Western cultures decorate with pine trees and holly during the holiday season. The Vietnamese people also use plants and flowers. In Central and South Vietnam, you will see *Ochna integerrima* also known as yellow Mei flower. In the north, you will see peach flower. The kumquat tree is a popular decoration for the living room during Tet. It's fruit symbolizes the fertility and fruitfulness that the family hopes for in the coming year.

Everyone buys new clothes and shoes to wear of the first days of Tet. Like many Asian people, Vietnamese believe that the color red brings good luck so you will see a lot of people wearing that color.



Banh Tet

Special foods are prepared for Lunar New Year, especially Banh Tet. It is mainly made from sticky rice, pork, and mung bean. The ingredients are mixed together and covered with banana leaves. Sometimes, family members will get together to make Banh Tet, giving them a chance to talk, tell stories, and reminisce.

Days of preparation are followed by days of relaxed celebration. Officially, it is a three-day celebration but it can last a week. The first day of Tet is reserved for the nuclear family. Children wear their new clothes, give their elders the traditional Tet greetings and receive lucky money in red envelopes in exchange. According to Vietnamese tradition, if good things come to the family on the first day of the lunar new year, the entire following year will also be full of blessings. For that reason, a moral, good-tempered person will be invited first into the house. The second day of Tet is usually reserved for friends, while the third day is for teachers, who command respect in Vietnam.

Tet officially ends with the dragon parade, which is intended to scare away evil spirits.

2018 World Reading Challenge

Geelong Regional Libraries shared a booklist on their Facebook page called the 2018 World Reading Challenge from www.taleaway.com. It takes you on a global reading journey with books available from local libraries. It perfectly complements the summer reading theme adopted by our library partners, "Reading Takes You Everywhere." Visit your library to sign up for summer reading now and while you are at it, browse some of these titles:

[Afghanistan](#): The Kite Runner

[Antarctica](#): Shiver

[Argentina](#): Heartbreak Tango

[Australia](#): The Secret River

[Bahamas](#): Wind from the Carolinas

[Bangladesh](#): A Golden Age

[Brazil](#): Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon

[Canada](#): The Blind Assassin

[Chile](#): Eva Luna

[China](#): Snow Flower and the Secret Fan

[Cambodia](#): First They Killed My Father

[Congo](#): The Poisonwood Bible

[Dominican Rep](#): The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

[Ethiopia](#): Cutting for Stone

[Fiji](#): Maya

[Germany](#): The Book Thief

[Iceland](#): Burial Rites

[Columbia](#): One Hundred Years of Solitude

[India](#): A Suitable Boy

[Indonesia](#): This Earth of Mankind

[Iran](#): Rooftops of Tehran

[Iraq](#): The Yellow Birds

[Ireland](#): The Wonder

[Italy](#): The Name of the Rose

[Japan](#): The Wind Up Bird Chronicle

[Mexico](#): Like Water for Chocolate

[Myanmar](#): The Glass Palace

[Nepal](#): Palpasa Café

[Oman](#): The Turtle of Oman

[Pakistan](#): I am Malala

[Philippines](#): When The Elephants Dance

[South Korea](#): Please Look After Mom

[Sweden](#): A Man Called Ove

[Vietnam](#): The Quiet American

Tutor/Student Spotlight

Tannie Doan, *Student*

Q: Where are you from?

I come from Vietnam

Q: When you were in Vietnam, did you work?

Little bit. I worked on a farm there. We grow black pepper. My family are farmers.

Q: Do you work here in the U.S.?

Yes, I work here. I do nails. I went to school in California for one year to learn nails.

Q: What do you prefer? Nails or farming?

I like nails. Farming is a lot of work.

Q: Why did you want to learn English?

My sister told me to learn the English and my daughter too. She said that I need to talk good English now. I talk a little bit to our customers and other people.

Q: Did you know any English when you came?

I knew a little bit of English but now I know a lot more. Rosie is a good teacher. She taught me how to talk on the phone and read books. Right now we are reading about Malala.

Q: I understand that you were traveling in the early part of the year. Were you in Vietnam for the New Year?

Yes. I like the New Year. We have flowers, cookies, candy. The whole family is together and everybody is happy. It's a big party. We cook special food like Banh Tet. You put rice, meat, and beans together and wrap it up in banana leaves. We wear New Year dresses. It's red for the New Year.

Rosie McVay, *Tutor*

Q: How long have you tutored?

For four years with just one student, Tannie.

Tannie: Yes, it's been four years!

Q: Why did you decide to tutor?

Because I wanted to get involved in the community and it was a perfect way to get involved in a different kind of thing. I do a lot of gardening and a lot of community projects but this was a special way to meet a new person.

Q: How did you find out about Literacy Volunteers Fox Valley?

I found out about it at AAUW (American Association of University Women). My friend, Claudia Curtis (a former tutor and board member), told me about it.



Tannie Doan, left, and tutor Rosie McVay.

Q: Are you a professional teacher?

I'm not a professional teacher but I have taught horticulture classes and when I was in Pennsylvania I taught personal decision making and job readiness as a volunteer with the prison.

Q: Tell me about that.

Often times we keep doing something because we have always done it that way but we don't get the result we want. So it's a way of thinking through a situation, taking the facts, the feelings, the thoughts, the outcome, and asking yourself if this is what you want. If not, you think about how you can change to reach a different outcome. It was a really good thing for me personally. I also incorporated it in my work in South Africa.

Q: What did you do in South Africa?

I worked at the National Botanical Gardens, the University of Stellenbosch Botanical Gardens and for their forestry school on a volunteer project. For one year, I was with the Department of Agriculture doing a USAID program I ran in the Western Cape.

Tannie: I garden too.

Yes, Tannie is a big gardener too because she was a farmer. It's something we have in common. When we found that connection, we knew we would be o.k.

Q: What do you like best about tutoring?

I like the relationship. I like the one-on-one. It's interesting for me to learn about language, how language works and how we take it for granted. When we first met, we couldn't talk to each other. We have found ways that we can communicate. It's amazing how far Tannie has come.

Q: If someone was thinking about being a literacy volunteer but they weren't sure, what would you say?

I would say, take the training. You get a lot of information. You get assigned a student. You learn a lot. You have a lot of back up if you get stuck. You can go to the organization to get advice and there are a lot of tutors around to ask. And the library is helpful too. Meeting at the library is fantastic because we go out into the library and pick up books or look at things.

Tannie: Yes, I like that. I love the library.

So try it. It's so rewarding.

Books for Students

Tutors, are your adult students interested in summer reading? Remember that they are welcome to register for prizes at any of our partner libraries.

The books they log do not have to be library books. We have held some books from the Barnes & Noble Holiday Book Drive and we are happy to give them away. They can read these books at their own pace and don't have to worry about getting them back to the library on time. We have multiple copies of popular books suitable for adults who read at a grade level equivalent of 3-12.

Contact margarita@lvfv.org to see what she has in stock. The books do not have to be returned to us. Please gift them to your student.



We Want to Hear from You!

Know someone who deserves the “spotlight” or have an article you would like to see in this newsletter?

Send your suggestions to info@lvfv.org.

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- Sharing your ideas

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