

Reading the New York Times

✓ *Comprehension* ✓ *Vocabulary* ✓ *Pronunciation* ✓ *Culture* ✓ *Current Events* ✓ *Civics*

Barbara Hubatkova was born in Prague, Czech Republic, during the period when it was governed under a Communist regime. When the Velvet Revolution occurred Barbara was 16. With new opportunities for business creation, she helped her mother open a dental lab which is still a family business today. Now, many years later, she and her daughter and husband live in Venice. Barbara says that her husband Paul tried for 23 years to get a green card, but it was only after they had purchased a vacation house here that they finally won the Diversity Green Card Lottery and became eligible to stay. This is a United States program that makes 55,000 green cards available to under-represented countries. Now both Barbara and Paul have jobs and have established new lives

While still in Prague, Barbara learned some English from movies and American music. She says that subtitles were very helpful. With Paul's help, she learned to speak and understand basic English, but her pronunciation was a problem. Her daughter Kate encouraged her to get help to improve it. Barbara began studying English at Suncoast Technical College, but realized that she needed one-on-one coaching and more opportunity to speak. She turned to LVSSC and was referred to Joe Pokorney, tutor and board member of the organization. Joe was delighted, especially since he has family roots in Czech Republic and he has visited there. Barbara made it clear that pronunciation improvement was her primary goal, but it became clear that she also needed some assistance with every day activities of life in this new culture.

Joe and Barbara meet once a week for an hour and a half. They spend part of the time discussing recent events and the basics of



Joe Pokorney and Barbara Hubatkova

navigating the cultural and civic norms of living in Florida and the United States. Barbara regularly turns to Joe for advice on many different issues. In doing this she is also getting lots of practice with vocabulary, sentence structure and verb tenses.

The second part of their session is devoted to Barbara's reading the first page of the Sunday New York Times. She regularly reads complex political stories and news reports. Joe assists her with pronunciation and encourages her to discuss the story to be certain she understands the content. Barbara does understand what she reads and has become quite comfortable discussing it.

Barbara states that 2 years ago, she did not speak English. Now she runs the household, contracting for services to make renovations to her home, dealing with utilities providers, internet phone service and the school system. Because Paul is away on business much of the time, Barbara had to become confident and effective very quickly. About 6 months ago, Barbara got a job at the YMCA teaching Spinning, a vigorous indoor cycling workout.

[See Reading New York Times on p.2](#)

President's Corner

CONGRATULATIONS!

Thanks to each and every one of **YOU**, Literacy Volunteers has made great strides since our last newsletter. Our Speakers Bureau has increased presentations to local groups tremendously. We ARE getting the word out and becoming well known in our communities. We have recruited new tutors, increased our classes and welcomed many new volunteers to our organization.

It is a tribute to your dedication when I go into the North Port Library and view a class being held, a tutor and student working on our computers, two one-to-one tutoring sessions in Study Rooms, a Literacy student working on her own, our Coordinator interviewing a new student and a tutor and student working in another corner of the Library. This happened at the same time on ONE day.

This newsletter is full of wonderful successes and upcoming events and fundraisers. Please read thoroughly. I encourage you to take advantage of the time spent in planning these events for your benefit. You asked for them and we have provided. We sincerely appreciate your support of our upcoming fundraisers. Be sure to review the flyers in this newsletter.

WELCOME to new tutors and **WELCOME BACK** to those of you who have dedicated countless hours to our success. I hope everyone will contribute as we explore new ideas. We are interested in hearing from you. Don't be afraid to "speak up" and be heard. Have questions?? Don't hesitate to ask. We are always available to meet with you.

-- Jan Gallas



Save the Dates! We encourage you to participate in these activities.

For details on signing up for any of these events, refer to the page number after the event titles or contact one of the Coordinators.

Sat., 2/18, 8:00 am	United Way Community Walk (p.5)	Downtown Venice , Centennial Park
Tues. 2/28, 10:30 am	Financial Literacy Workshop (p.4)	North Port Library, Juliano Room
Wed. 3/8, 10:00 am	Tutor Coffee Klatch (p.3)	North Port Library, Juliano Room
Sat., 3/18, 9:00 am	United Way Community Walk (p.5)	North Port , Dallas White Park
Sat. 3/25 9:00-3:00 pm	Venice Book Fair (p.10)	Downtown Venice, Centennial Park
Wed., 3/29, 1:00 pm	Annual Card & Game Party (p.6)	Jacaranda Trace, Venice
Mon., 4/24, 12:00 noon	Annual Meeting & Luncheon	Venice Art Center, Venice

Reading New York Times continued from p.1

Barbara is an athlete and is able to teach several classes a day. Her students enjoy her classes and have no difficulty understanding Barbara's instruction. Her daughter Kate, who

is a student in the International Baccalaureate Program at Venice High School, gives her mom high marks for her language improvements.

You're invited! Please plan to drop in for coffee and tutor talk.

Ideas flow with coffee!

LVSSC Tutor Coffee Klatch

Wednesday, March 8, 2017 10:00 a.m.

North Port Library Juliano Room



Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in North Port on December 8th

In the November newsletter, all tutors were invited to attend a casual volunteer luncheon at the North Port Library. About 30 attended and enjoyed a delicious lunch and good conversation.

Tutors wrote their thoughts on Post Its about "The best thing about tutoring is...." and the Post Its were displayed for all to see. It was evident that tutoring is a satisfying activity for those volunteers. They feel good about helping someone and feel they are making a real difference in their student's life.

The purpose of the luncheon and the Coffee Klatch on March 8th is to get to know each other, chat with other tutors, compare notes, learn more about LVSSC, and see how we can all help each other as well as our students.

Tutors are so often alone with their student. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to network with other tutors.



Financial Literacy anyone?

An LVSSC “first” -- a **workshop for tutors and students together -- or even separately.** Tutors, bring your students. This program is for both of you. But if you can’t come, please send your student alone. Individual students and groups of students are more than welcome. (We recommend Level 1.5 or higher.) And if your student can’t come, please come by yourself, gather information and hear the presentation. It works every which way.

Literacy Volunteers has partnered with Fifth Third Bank for this important financial literacy workshop, designed specifically for ESL students. It will teach them about budgeting, debit and credit cards, checking accounts, paying bills, online banking, credit scores and how to use and change them, how to apply for a mortgage and how to work positively with a local bank -- in language they can understand.

Financial literacy and understanding is critical for a successful life in the U.S. It increases with time, discussion and real-life practice, and it’s a topic that many LVSSC tutors are asked to help their students with.



Please join Sarah Gilbert, Personal Banker, and Mark Torlucci, Assistant Vice President, Fifth Third Bank, for this important workshop. The first program is scheduled for North Port, Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2017 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in the Juliano Meeting Room at North Port library.

All LVSSC tutors (Venice and North Port) will receive an email about the program. A second program, scheduled in Venice, will be announced later in the year. Again, all tutors in all locations will receive email notification. Please call Sharon Betterton at 941-861-1352 or email her at venice.literacy@gmail.com to reserve your spot.

Dear LitWits...

Question: How can I make learning English more fun and interesting by personalizing the lesson?

Answer: Story telling may be a good answer. The student suggests the topic. As the student and tutor create the story, each adds a sentence that logically follows the previous sentence. The story is written by the tutor unless the student is on a high enough level to write it down; in this case the tutor can also evaluate the student’s spelling. When the tutor and student create a story together, several things happen.

- The story reflects the interests of the student.
- The student uses the learned vocabulary and hopefully adds to it.
- As the student and tutor collaborate on the story, both can evaluate the student's use of vocabulary, tense, sentence structure and comprehension.
- There is an opportunity for the tutor to challenge the student by adding new tenses, vocabulary, irregular verbs, as well as pronunciation exercises.

The end-product is a document that is of interest to the student and contains many of the elements of language learning that each can appreciate.

In the same vein, the tutor can assign a film to watch that is of interest to the student. The tutor must have specific questions to elicit discussion that focuses on comprehension, vocabulary and tense.

Have a question for **LitWits**? Email it to venice.literacy@gmail.com with “LITWITS” as the Subject.

Community Charity Walks - Venice & North Port

Walking is optional. The goal is raising \$\$ and having fun.



United Way of South Sarasota County 11th Annual Venice Community Charity Walk Saturday, February 18, 2017

Downtown Venice, Centennial Park Gazebo

TIME:

Registration 8:00 a.m.

Walk 9:00 a.m. *Rain or shine!*

Enjoy music, fruit, and a free hot dog at the Gazebo!
Shop at the nearby Farmers Market.

United Way of South Sarasota County 7th Annual North Port Community Charity Walk Saturday, March 18, 2017

Dallas White Park

5900 Greenwood Ave., North Port (near North Port Blvd. & US41)

TIME:

Registration 9:00 a.m.

Walk 10:00 a.m. *Rain or shine!*

Enjoy music and complimentary fruit, cold water, snacks,
and pizza during closing ceremonies.
Stay and swim at the YMCA and enjoy the Park amenities.

Support the United Way and Literacy Volunteers

Make checks payable to United Way of South Sarasota Co.

Mail to Literacy Volunteers, 260 N. Nokomis Ave., Venice, FL 34285

50% of donations used by United Way for 28 local agencies and
50% is returned to Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County.

Call the Venice Literacy office for more info 941-861-1352.

Literacy Changes Lives!



Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County

Card and Game Party Wed., March 29, 1:00 - 3:30

at Jacaranda Trace in Venice

in Cadbury Commons auditorium, 3600 William Penn Way
(first left turn off Jacaranda Blvd north of US 41 in So. Venice)

Invite friends for a table of 4 or more and
call Sandy 941-412-0107 for reservations.

\$15 per person in advance

Mail checks to: Literacy Volunteers,
260 N. Nokomis Ave., Venice, FL 34285

BRING: Your own cards or games
Cash for “Teacup Auction” & 50/50 Drawing

GREAT PRIZES AND REFRESHMENTS!

GRAND PRIZE



**SOUTHWEST
AIRLINES**

\$5 Donation per Entry

Win 2 round-trip airline tickets to anywhere
in the continental U.S.A. “Teacup Auction”
prizes include beautiful gift baskets and
dozens of donations from local businesses.

www.LiteracyChangesLives.org

Venice Office 861-1352 - North Port Office 861-1320

Free READING and ENGLISH help for ADULTS.

Making the Most of ESL Teaching Aids Workshop

A gathering of nineteen LVSSC tutors was held at North Port Library on Tuesday, Jan. 17. Kathie Page, long time experienced tutor, presented a Roundtable Workshop of ways to “mix up” your tutor sessions and “make tutoring fun.” Tutors in attendance work with students from different levels, and quickly discovered they could adapt all items presented to their particular student.

Kathie brought her student, Maria, along since she has used all of the games/handouts in their tutoring sessions. It was nice for tutors to talk with Maria and hear how she enjoyed these types of activities.



Kathie and Maria demonstrated some of the teaching aids and tutors tried out a few. There were fifteen handouts for tutors to include in sessions to make them more interesting along with a list of websites for tutors to check out. You could hear tutors saying “I like this one and will use it next week.” Or “I can see how I can use this with my student at his/her level.”

Thanks to everyone who participated and to Kathie and Maria for their time and organization of this workshop. Special thanks to Robin Blair for facilitating these kinds of workshops for our tutors throughout the year.

Student Success Stories - We'd Like to Print Yours

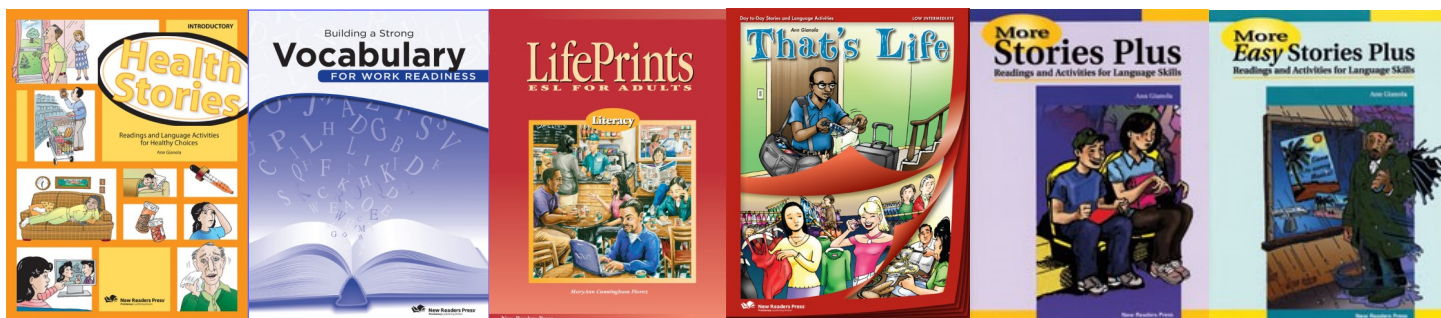
Irina, a physician from Russia, recently passed her second set of medical boards. This is a huge hurdle behind her on the way to becoming a doctor in this country. She was very worried about the results yet passed with scores that she described as “better than ok.”

This was accomplished by many, many focused hours of study. But, as a radiologist from Moscow, she knows her medicine, so a greater hurdle will be her next exam which is oral. This will require patient interaction and demonstration of easy communication with patients while applying the skills of assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

She's more advanced than many in reading and writing, but needs practice with conversation. We're following scripts practicing doctor patient discussions. By coincidence, I have a close friend who has a part time gig as an actor in a medical school. So she's given us some very practical advice. Irina is currently working in the offices of two different medical doctors while continuing to study for her oral boards. She recently moved to the east coast with her husband, and we continue conversations using Skype or FaceTime. This is fun!

-- Pam Marble, Tutor

New Books in Venice, and in North Port too



With grant funds from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, LVSSC purchased five new book titles from New Readers Press (NRP), along with some replacements, for the Venice Literacy Library.

Health Stories is a reader series comprised of three levels of student books -- introductory, low beginning and high beginning. The very short stories range from Levels .05 to low Level 2, and the exercises are appropriate for those levels -- and all three books introduce students to health care issues and health verbiage. These books are in the "Stories and Reading" section.

Building a Strong Vocabulary is another three-level series with individual books aimed at vocabulary for life skills, work readiness and preparation for academic study. Many NRP books are lower level, but this series is not. These are serious vocabulary books, suitable for Level 2.5 and higher. They are housed in the "Vocabulary" section.

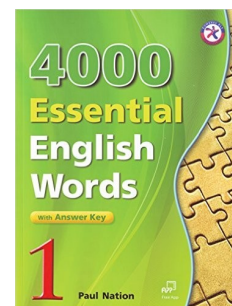
LifePrints and **That's Life** are both series books, ranging from Level 0 to Level 3. These are multi-purpose books that include reading, comprehension, vocabulary, writing, grammar and opportunity for conversation. For tutors who have found Challenger, Endeavor and even Voyager a bit too difficult for their students, these books might be the ticket. **LifePrints** also has related workbooks you can borrow; **That's Life** does not come with workbooks.

More Stories Plus and **More Easy Stories Plus** are replacements for books that were lost due to water damage. They are easy readers for students at Level 0.5 through 1.5 and are housed in the "Stories and Reading" section.

These are not modern or new books, but they do allow low level students to actually use readers and try reading comprehension exercises.

A financial literacy book, **Control Your Money**, is written for learners at Level 2.5 (strong intermediate) and above about the importance of managing, saving, spending and investing money. It is housed in the "Workplace/Community" section. This book is for tutors who work with higher level students and want a comprehensive financial resource to help students learn about managing money in America.

New in both the Venice and North Port literacy libraries is **4,000 Essential English Words**, a six-book vocabulary series written by renown EFL teacher Paul Nation. Both libraries have **Books 1, 2** and **3** only. Paul Nation is a proponent of teaching language learners English vocabulary that is most frequently heard, read and encountered in daily life, instead of teaching academic or infrequently heard words. The goal, of course, is for students to build a working vocabulary for daily use and to understand most of what they hear and read. As you would expect, the words in the series get progressively harder as the book numbers increase. The books in both libraries are the easiest three books in the series. All of these books have exercises that are easy for tutors to replicate and build for more practice.



Class Memories

In the Advanced English Conversation class the students met with their teachers Maureen Keyes and Ron Taylor for the last time. Since this would be their last meeting, Maureen asked if they would help her write a short report about their time together.

Maureen suggested that the students each respond to prompt: **I will always remember...** Thus began the story.

Maureen will always remember being humbled by the hard work and determination of each student to learn to speak English. She wished all immigrants could witness their bravery and tenacity.

Svitlana will always remember the helpful teachers, each student, the movies, the literature that was discussed and the poems we recited. She will always remember the movie *The Dead Poet's Society*, but especially she will remember the songs we sang.

Anastasia will always remember the helpful information she learned, the interesting stories she heard about American culture and the poetry that we recited.

Baha will always remember this class because it was his first class at Common Grounds. Baha recently arrived in the U.S. and wanted to learn to speak English, not only for himself but also to help his step-father. He wanted to become a good example because his step-father has not learned much English during the five years he has lived in North Port.

Alex will always remember the interesting words that he learned, and how funny Ron's movie *The Gypsy Yodeler* was and how much it made him laugh.

Our guest **Halyna** moved to the United States about 60 years ago from the anti-religious regime in Ukraine. She will always remember how well everyone spoke English. She was offered encouragement from everyone. She will remain grateful for the opportunity to live in the US and learn to speak English because it helped her believe in God.

Mary will remember many things but most importantly the friends that she has made over the years while learning to speak English. She will always remember the nice people that volunteered to teach her. She is most appreciative.

Vladimir will always remember how much the teachers have helped him learn English. He told of a rather harrowing tale about an encounter with a small American shark that swam near him. Vladimir yelled at the little shark in his first language but it continued to bother him and even nipped his leg. Finally the shark turned away when Vladimir began to yell in English.

Ron will always remember his resistance to working with his wife to teach English. Originally, he had been somewhat annoyed with her request. It turned out to be a great experience. He will always remember being surprised when he began to sing *May There Always be Blue Skies* because everyone joined him by singing the same song in his or her respective language.

All of us will remember when this interesting group of individuals came together at Common Grounds Hall in North Port Florida from distant places like Kazakhstan, Argentina, Poland and the Ukraine to learn more about the United States and how to speak English.

Thanks to WKDW 97.5 FM

For the last year, this Real Community Radio non-profit radio station has allowed LVSSC to use their Common Grounds Meeting Hall at 12735 S. Tamiami Trail, North Port, for Saturday Advanced Conversation classes. Check out their website and Facebook page for their events and tune in to 97.5 FM.



Teaching English Pronunciation

There is a new series of workshops designed for our ESL tutors. Recently the first was held at State College of South Florida in Venice. The presenter, Maria Spelleri is an Associate Professor of Language and Literature. She provided a very informative program on teaching English Pronunciation. It was attended by 18 LVSSC tutors

The workshop focused on accent reduction for English learners. Professor Spelleri provided very useful tips on how to teach students to speak English clearly. It was well received by the group as they demonstrated enthusiastic participation. Professor Spelleri also provided helpful handouts for future use.

Special thanks to Robin Blair for planning and facilitating this event. Thanks to Coordinators Sharon Betterton and Karen Bridegam for getting the word to all our tutors. It was a perfect start to this series of workshops for the continuing education of LVSSC tutors.

The LVSSC Board is committed to providing continuing education for its tutors. Some presentations will be in organized classes such as this one, while others will be more informal and provided during luncheons and coffee klatches. Tutors are encouraged to attend these sessions as a show of commitment to excellence and to be more informed of the latest and best practices in teaching English as a Second Language.



VENICE, FLORIDA'S SIXTH ANNUAL BOOK FAIR & WRITERS' FESTIVAL

FRIDAY NIGHT 3/24/2017

3:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Venice Centre Mall

3 Writing Classes

Wine & Cheese Reception

\$20.00

RSVP venicewritersfestival@gmail.com

SATURDAY 3/25/2017

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Centennial Park

50+ Authors Signing and Selling Books

Drop by the Literacy Volunteers booth and buy raffle tickets on two Southwest Airlines round-trip flights to any Southwest destination including international.

Tutor Training for New Volunteers - Please tell your friends!

Thursdays, Feb. 9 and 16: **2-day tutor training at Jacaranda Library, Venice**
Saturdays, Apr. 22 and 29: **2-day tutor training at Jacaranda Library, Venice**

Reserve for Venice sessions by contacting Sharon Betterton at venice.literacy@gmail.com or 941-861-1352.

Welcome New Tutors

On December 10 and 17, this group of new volunteers attended Tutor Training by Linda Wieman at the North Port Public Library.



Left to Right....

Front: Barbara Schuler, Marie Ott

Mid: Lavonne Radonovich, Rona Hunnisett, Marilyn Jansa, Mary Ann Dillahunty, Ellen Schleicher

Back: Janice Dirmeitis, Hugh Wheeler, Roy Auger, Mike Dishnow

On January 5 and 12, this group of new volunteers attended Tutor Training by Esther Bird at the Venice Area Beautification Inc. (VABI) building in Venice.



Left to Right....

Front: Jan Hinck, Jan Noda, Mary Lou Bogart

Middle: Donna Sweet, Bonnie Hobgood, Susie White, Andye Healy, Tru Pearl

Back: Phil Smith, Tom Wrzosek

**Literacy Volunteers
of South Sarasota County**
260 N. Nokomis Ave.
Venice, FL 34285

Literacy Changes Lives



FIRST CLASS

Literacy Volunteers of South Sarasota County

www.LiteracyChangesLives.org

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