

# The Lamplighter

April, May, June, 2006

A quarterly newsletter of the  
Literacy Council of Bonita Springs

## BEAR Building Leased

The Literacy Council is negotiating a three-year lease with the Bonita-Estero Association of Realtors (BEAR) to utilize its 1700-square-foot office space opposite the Council on Old 41, reported Director Katie Verna. Jo Simon, a tutor and realtor, was instrumental in arranging the transaction. The Irwin Family Foundation has agreed to underwrite the rent for the first six months of the lease. The Council, which has been using the facility for evening classes since mid-June, will install the offices of the Council executive director and the program director. Individual tutor-student classes will be held in the office-sized classrooms and larger classes in the main classroom space, added Katie. Mothers in the popular Moms & Tots program will attend classes in the main classroom and their children will play in the foyer.

## Annual Meeting Set For August 1

The Council's annual meeting is set for Tuesday, August 1, 4pm, at Northern Trust Bank in the Promenade. All tutors, students and supporters are invited. Come hear about the accomplishments of our tutors and students and meet the new executive director, Susan Acuña.

## Kudos for Katie!

Several Council members have made financial contributions to the Council on behalf of departing Director Katie Verna. Jean Prokapow wrote: "Your smile, your caring concern and your efficiency will all be missed. Good luck in your new life." Helen Bolton wished her "Many happy days in your 'retirement'".

## Susan Acuña Joined Literacy Council June 12 as New Executive Director

Susan Acuña, the former director of community relations for Good Wheels, Inc., Fort Myers, has been appointed executive director of the Bonita Springs Literacy Council by the board of directors. She will succeed Katie Verna, who is leaving in mid-September.

"I want to continue the vision created by Katie and her predecessors of bringing the English language to all those who are in need in this area and to expand the services offered to our student population," said Susan.

A native of Hammond, Indiana, Susan developed an extensive background in social service organization management, including fundraising, community relations, proposal writing and grants management, and public speaking, following studies at Indiana University for a bachelor of arts in home economics with concentration in human development in the family and a master degree in social work with concentration in management, administration, community, research and organization. She also has experience in training and teaching, program and curriculum development, counseling, marketing, and advocacy.

Over the past 25 years she has worked as a counselor/caseworker and assistant director for the Salvation Army, Indianapolis, Indiana; lead teacher and math instructor in Indianapolis pre- and elementary schools; advocacy coordinator for the Indiana Youth Services Association; project manager of a public welfare reform program developed by Lockheed Martin Information Management Systems, Delray Beach, Florida; instructor in Adult ESL and Family and Consumer Science/Peer counseling in Broward County public schools; and as development director for the Lee County Salvation Army. Good Wheels is a 501c3 program handling specialized needs transportation in Lee, Glades and Hendry counties. Susan is also a member of the Chamber of Southwest Florida, the Gulf Coast Society of Fund Raising Executives and the Spring 2006 class of Leadership Lee County.

Susan attributes her lifelong interest in language education to her father, who, though born in America, grew up in Czechoslovakia and returned to the United States at 16. While growing up in Indiana, she saw the difficulty he had in learning English. Susan also met her current husband Miguel while teaching English to foreigners in Fort Lauderdale. He had migrated to America five years ago from Manizales, Colombia, where he owned a construction company. Her daughter Jessica is a musician in Bloomington, Indiana, and her son Jordan is studying biology at the University of Central Florida. In her leisure time, Susan enjoys reading, walking, traveling, cooking and (someday) hopes to play golf with her husband.

## Lee County United Way Allocates \$80,000 to the Literacy Council

The United Way of Lee County has allocated \$80,000 to the Literacy Council for its 2007 program, a 12 percent increase over this year, reported Director Katie Verna. The report of the agency's allocation committee mentioned several key factors in the United Way decision to donate funds. "As a growing agency relying heavily on volunteers, this agency is remarkably well run," it said. "It is obvious (the students) are making great progress and the program is truly making a difference in their lives. The team continues to be impressed with the (Council's) outreach efforts, especially its ability to recruit volunteers inside the gated communities. The Moms and Tots program is another wonderful outreach effort. The (Council) board members appear to be very enthusiastic, very committed and very involved." The committee "once again applauded the (Council's) highly effective collaborations with local schools, agencies, businesses and communities. . .and was extremely impressed with the enthusiasm and experience of the (current) director." (The funds allocated for the 2007 Council programs will be raised during the fall 2006 fund campaign.)

For the 13th consecutive year the United Way of Lee County surpassed its fundraising goal by raising \$6,273,633, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. It was also the eighth consecutive year that the campaign achieved a double-digit increase. United Way agencies made over 400 presentations and numerous tours of agency facilities. Over 1,000 volunteers and donors contributed to the campaign, including 36 Keel Club givers and hundred of employees at United Way partner agencies who gave over \$90,000. The Literacy Council is a United Way partner agency.

## Ohio Law Firm Staff Donates "Denim" Funds

The Cleveland, Ohio law firm of Hahn Loeser Parks has donated \$375 to the Literacy Council. The funds were contributed by staff members as a \$5 "fee" to wear denim clothing on Friday in May. Kim Hastings, an attorney in the firm who is also on the Council board, recommended the donation.

## Students Attain Citizenship, Real Estate Goals

Five Council students achieved distinguished success recently. Mirsada Bajraktarevic, John Villegas and Maria Teresa Gutierrez passed the test for U.S. citizenship and were sworn in as U.S. citizens. Mirsada has been a student of Vincent Carosella since March 2003. In Bentley Village, John was tutored by Rosetta Mosker and Betty Heider and Maria by Dolores Bowles. Gerhard and Elke Gerwins successfully completed the State of Florida real estate course and passed the state licensing examination. The Gerwins studied English for the past nine months under the tutelage of Donald Kuhlman, of Marsh Landing.

## Student Opens Cleaning Service

Fabiana Jimenez, a student at Bentley Village where she has been a housekeeper, has opened a cleaning service in the Bonita Springs area. The service will perform residential and commercial service, deep cleaning, final cleaning and construction clean-up. For rates, call 433-0164 or 239-410-9039 (cell).

## Congratulations, Successful Students!

Herica Aguilar, Level 1, Anna Curtin, tutor  
 Marco Barahona, Level 2, Mary Ann Simon, tutor  
 Noe Barahona, Level 2, Susan Bartos, tutor  
 Reynaldo Bernal Cayo, Level 1, Bob Gowland, tutor  
 Felicitas Blanco, Level 1, Pat McIntyre, tutor  
 Guillermo Bustamonte, Level 1, Jo Ellen Bell, tutor  
 David Calel, Level 4, Joan Lanois, tutor  
 Maria Contreras, Level 1, Peggy Blanchard, tutor  
 David Cruz Fregoso, Level 1, Alison Schmerler, tutor  
 Erika Davila, Level 4, Dorn Van Cleave, tutor  
 Gelber Escalante, Level 1, Maureen Schmitt, tutor  
 Darwin Espinosa, Level 1, Diane Headley, tutor  
 Elizabeth Espinosa, Level 1, Ann Wentz, tutor  
 Sebastian Esteban, Level 1, Maryanne Kure & Elaine Harbold, tutors  
 Morena Fuentes, Level 1, Esperanza Fierro, tutor  
 Noemy Godoy, Level 1, Nancy Watts, tutor  
 Julio Hernandez, Level 1, Pat Suwyn, tutor  
 Martin Hernandez, Level 4, Leonard O'Brien, tutor  
 Jose Hernandez Flores, Level 1, Esperanza Fierro, tutor  
 Maria Huerta, Level 1, Elaine Landau, tutor  
 Suzana Keco, Level 1, J.R. Hayward, tutor  
 Karol Lima, Level 1, Esperanza Fierro, tutor  
 Julio Linares, Level 1, Jo Ellen Bell, tutor  
 Enrique Linares, Level 4, Tom Burke, tutor  
 Genoveva Luced, Level 1, C.T. Hopkins  
 Fausto Munzo, Level 2, Susan Bartos, tutor  
 Moises Munzo, Level 4, Tom Burke, tutor  
 Miguel Olivera, Level 1, Bob Gowland, tutor  
 Angelina Ortiz, Level 2, Heather Graves, tutor  
 Elisa Portillo, Level 1, Carolyn Wolff, tutor  
 Refugio Regalado, Level 1, Esperanza Fierro, tutor  
 Beatriz Rier, Level 1, Jane Ruhl, tutor  
 Jesus Rodriquez, Level 4, Bob Gaudette, tutor  
 Elizabeth Salas, Level 1, Wanda Nielsen, tutor  
 Martha Seelig, Level 1, Ingrid Clauson, tutor  
 Ines Tapia, Level 2, Lane Grabow, tutor  
 Antonio Trotta, Level 1, Mary Schell, tutor

### Classes

**Level 1, June 06, Peter Gibbs & Judith Weintraub, tutors**

Ever Hernández  
 Merlin Cruz  
 Juan Arriaga  
 Julian Rodriguez  
 Eugenio Domingo  
 Rolando Pérez

**Amilcar Santos, teacher**

**Level 2, March 06**

María Franco  
 Adela Juarez  
 Nicolas Gonzalez  
 Guillermo Ventura  
 Evelin Díaz  
 Damian Cruz  
 Rey Simón

**Level 1, 9 March 06**

José Vásquez  
 José Florencio  
 José Celestino  
 Sandra López  
 Jesús Nicolas  
 Esbin Guzman  
 Manuel Abelardo

**Level 1, May 06,**

**Pat Del Giorno, tutor**

José Turcios  
 Jaime Lancon  
 Miguel Alonso  
 José Trejo  
 Ruben Figueroa  
 Reynaldo Bernal  
 José Durán  
 Karina Aguilar  
 José García

continued in Supplement

## Welcome Aboard, New Tutors!

The Workshop on April 3 and 10 was held at Spanish Wells Country Club. Andrea Smith, trainer.

Jim Brennan	Rosanna Murphy
Sue Coates	Frank Ricca
Shirley Dalton	Wanda Robes
Bonnie Dunne-Martin	Peg Shapiro
Bunny Fleming	Yvonne Siegel
Jean Gilbert	Jo Simon
Margaret Hoffman	Carol Varady
Jim Loughran	Phyllis Weisberger
Mary Loughran	Alexandra Wilkins
Linda Morgan	Tamra Wineland

The Workshop on April 22, 29, May 6 was held in Bentley Village Community Center. Bert Bonner and Delores Brecker, trainers.

Lucy Brisky	Celia Llaguno
Olive May Dibble	Donald Metcalf
Trish Fitzsimons	Elisa Olmeda
Rose Hutton	Peg Rizzie
Gary Kuhre	Ross Ward

The Workshop was held June 7 and 15 at the Verandah Country Club. Andrea Smith, trainer.

Glorianne Babcock	Leslie Liddle
Fern Brereton	Jill Monks
Dianne DeBoest	Nancy Parvin
Luba Grossman	Bettye Smith
Carol Jameson	

## Three New Literacy Programs Launched

New worksite literacy programs are underway at the Spanish Wells, Bonita Springs, and Verandah, Fort Myers, residential communities. The Mediterra community in North Naples is planning training for volunteers in November to begin setting up a literacy program for employees who work there. Literacy programs are already established in eight other communities, including Bentley Village, Collier's Reserve, Copperleaf, Imperial, Pelican's Nest, Shadow Wood, Spring Run, and Worthington.

## Ex-Librarian Donates \$500

Bobbi Skaggs, a former librarian, has generously given \$500 to the Council Resource Center in celebration of an important birthday. Thanks, Bobbi.

## Wedding Bells Are Ringing!

Longtime tutor trainer Bert Bonner married Patricia McIntyre June 24 in Naples. The wedding reception was held at the Bonita Bay Club. The couple will take a honeymoon trip in August to visit Pat's daughter Mikella in Seattle and then cruise from Vancouver to Alaska. Pat, who has lived in southwest Florida for almost 30 years, is retiring as executive director of the Precious Cargo pre-school in Naples. Bert moved to Florida in 1992 from the New York-New Jersey region where he was active in real estate development and financial consulting. He joined the Literacy Council in 2000. Bert has one son, who lives in New Jersey and two grandchildren, James, 4, and Elizabeth, 1, with a third, Alexandra, due on Thanksgiving Day. Bert and Pat have asked that all wedding contributions be made to the Literacy Council.

## Artist Paints Classroom Scene

A painting of a Literacy Council classroom session has been made by Sheila Breck, of New York, and now hangs in the Council office. Sheila painted the scene in pastels after visiting the class being conducted by her sister, tutor Pat Del Giorno, in May.

## New Council Office Landscaping

Two volunteers, Chantal Matthews and George Polesky, have donated plants and lumber and landscaped the area in front of the Council office. Chantal recently planted several shrubs, including ponytail cactus and crown of thorns. George installed several 2x4 wooden pieces to border the flower beds and he will also build a retaining wall.

## Kerty Reiterer-Crespo Promoted

Our office assistant, Kerty Reiterer-Crespo, has been promoted to office manager, announced Director Katie Verna. Kerty joined the Council office in June of last year. In her new position, she will be responsible for student liaison and maintaining Council records, office supplies and related duties.

## Sign Up for a Suncoast Visa Credit Card

Literacy Council volunteers are eligible to obtain a Platinum Visa Credit Card sponsored by Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union to earn bonus points for every net dollar they spend which can then be exchanged for travel and brand name merchandise. For more information, visit [www.scorecardrewards.com](http://www.scorecardrewards.com) and look in the Travel and Merchandise sections.

## Tips for Tutors

These suggestions will help Council tutors to teach more effectively, advises experienced tutor, Barbara Green:

1. Speak slowly.
2. Don't be afraid of silence; the student may be thinking of the right word and structure for his ideas.
3. Use visual aids, hand signals, draw pictures.
4. Always have an English-Spanish dictionary.
5. Have a sense of humor. Make learning fun.
6. Remember that there is support available from other more experienced teachers.

## Student Council Sponsors Raffle, Talk on 'Canes

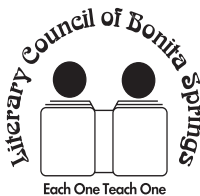
Members of the Literacy Council Student Council have launched a raffle to raise money for the farewell party to Director Katie Verna on Sunday, September 10, from 4-8 p.m. in the Bonita Community Hall on Old 41 Road. Tutors and volunteers are invited. Raffle tickets are \$2 each. Prizes will include a stereo system, a DVD player, a women's cosmetics basket, plus other items. The Council will also sponsor on Sunday, July 9, a talk by Diego Grisales on hurricane safety. They are also selling Literacy Council T-shirts to help purchase more student materials, such as computer programs, books and videos. The shirts will illustrate the "before" and "after" of learning English drawn by student Ruben Figueroa. Members of the Student Council are also talking with students during classes to discover their needs and to resolve literacy problems.

## Newspaper Articles Laud Literacy Council

Immigrants are "inundating" the Literacy Council with interest in learning the English language, reported Melissa Cassutt in the June 23 issue of the Bonita Daily News. The article highlighted the experiences and goals of several students in learning English, including 70 year-old tutor Ugo Assi, of Italy, Maria Franco, of Colombia, Alfred Lopez, Jr., of Mexico, and Gladys Krause, of Peru. Learning English is a "step toward solving the immigration crisis" also said an editorial in the June 27 issue of the Daily News. "A phenomenon being seen at the Literacy Council of Bonita Springs may be the most positive outfall of the immigration uproar. The number of people learning to speak English is skyrocketing." . . . The Literacy Council is always in need of tutors, but the demand is even greater now. A year ago, the ratio of students to tutors was 3 to 1. It's much higher than that now. This is a perfect time for those who do speak the language to teach those who want to learn." The editorial concluded that learning English wouldn't solve the immigration system "failure", but would make it possible that "everyone could sit down together and come up with some solutions."

## Council Teaching Spanish to Company's Managers

A 12-week Spanish language course for managers of the Splash Zone, an Estero pool supply company, began June 29. Diego Grisales, a Council teacher, student and board director, is teaching the twice-weekly classes at the firm's warehouse. He has been certified as a teacher of Spanish in the State of Florida. Proceeds from the course will benefit Council programs.



**Literacy Council of Bonita Springs**  
PO Box 2703  
Bonita Springs, FL 34133



## Council Offers Spanish Language Classes

Weekly classes in the Spanish language will be offered to tutors and other area residents by the Literacy Council for six weeks starting Thursday, July 13. Beginning Spanish classes will be held from 12-2 p.m. and intermediate Spanish classes from 2-4p.m. Tuition is \$125, which will benefit Council programs. The teacher will be Amilcar Santos.

### OFFICE SCHEDULE

Susan Acuña, Executive Director  
Katie Verna, Program Director  
Kerty Rieterer Crespo, Office Manager-  
Monday through Friday  
9:00 to 5:00

Jeanne Sachs, Student/Tutor Coordinator  
Monday to Thurs., 4:00 to 9:00 pm  
Nora Martinez, Assistant Coordinator  
Monday through Friday, 5:00 to 9:00pm

**STUDENT LAB OPEN**  
Mon. to Fri., 9am to 9pm

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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