

## WELCOME TO TEXAS

By Nancy Casazza

*Welcome to Texas* is the title of a memoir written by Ernesto Ortiz, my tutorial student. It is a nostalgic portrayal of rural village life in Texas de Morales, Oaxaca, Mexico. Ernesto lived his childhood years in this small village of about 1300 people and in his book he recalls his happy childhood, the daily life of the village, its inhabitants, their work and their festivals, Ernesto and I are translating his memoirs into English as part of our tutorial experience. It has been a very rewarding experience for both of us – not only has Ernesto improved his English with the acquisition of new words, but also I, as a tutor, am learning about the rich and diverse culture of a Mexican village. It is truly a labor of love for Ernesto and a privilege for me.

Ernesto came to the United States about four years ago with his wife, Julia, sons, Eve and Diego and is employed by the Texas Furniture Company in Santa Rosa. The name of the company is no coincidence as the owner is also one of the many immigrants from Texas to come to the US looking for better work opportunities and a fulfilling life. In fact, *Texanos* represent about one in seven members of Petaluma's Latino community, where members of this Texas diaspora hold their "Holy Cross" celebration twice a year at St. Vincent de Paul church.

Ernesto comes from a large family of ten children and his ninety-two year old father still farms the land near his village. Ernesto, like many of his siblings, went to the University of Mexico in Mexico City where he received a MBA degree in Business Administration, learning skills he uses in his present job. His story, like many others, focuses on having better opportunities for his sons to learn English and to find a better job; he relates that in Mexico once someone is past forty, jobs are difficult to find and workers are often eased out. So he came to Petaluma because not only did he know people here from his village but also because Petaluma is a beautiful place to live.



photo John Fleming

There are two reasons he was motivated to write his story about Texas. The first is to answer the questions of his sons, "How was your childhood? How did you grow up?" Second, he feels that many wonderful customs are being lost and will never return in the same way. He wants to record them before they die out. He hopes that eventually his sons will return to Mexico to study at the University in Mexico City.

His hopes for the book are to publish a first edition in Mexico in June and then an English translation in the US. Meanwhile, Ernesto has a strong incentive to learn English with its structures and idioms as well as to improve his conversational skills and the acquisition of new words. For Ernesto, learning English is essential to success in life and he is making dramatic progress toward this goal.

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## Volunteer Opportunities

Mentor Coordinator  
Advertising Coordinator  
Board of Directors Member

*Please call the office if you are interested in any of these opportunities.*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



photo John Fleming

By Karen Fleming

Arnold Bennett said, "Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts." Well, the League has certainly been going through a number of changes. Moving twice last year and losing some key people in the League with the retirement of Ruth Maloney, Nancy Schell and Eleanor Welch, isn't easy. Ruth isn't going far though. She's going to continue as a volunteer and will be on our fundraising committee. Nancy is now a member of the Board of Directors and Eleanor is working for the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce on the WHEEL program.

We won't be filling the executive director position until the League is on a better financial footing. The Board of Directors will be taking on much of the work Ruth was doing. We have, however, brought in George Lentini as you will read about shortly in another article.

I'm starting to feel like a broken record. Every time I write an article for the newsletter I'm talking about the budget and asking for help. In fact, you will be receiving another fundraising letter next month from the League. You received our last fundraising letter during the holiday season which I know is a difficult time. So for those of you who might have put our letter aside for a more convenient time, you will be receiving another letter shortly. We are now paying \$6,000 dollars a year for rent, and we have payroll commitments. We have ongoing expenses associated with tutor workshops, in-services, and the library, and we need your help to meet these expenses and continue the important work that all of us do in support of our students and our community.

### **There are a number of ways you can help the League without writing a check:**

1. **Get Ready, Get Set, GO!** The Human Race is May 7th and in addition to featuring a 3K and 10K walk and run, there will be a fun time for all ages with a pancake breakfast, entertainment, costume contest, people's choice T-Shirt contest ..... and more. If you've never attended this event, this is the year to do it. Best of all, if each of us raised at least \$150, it would put the League on a better financial footing. Monies raised not only support the League, but also the Sonoma County Volunteer Center. If you're interested, call the office. We have pledge sheets and a fact sheet that gives you all the information you need to know regarding the event. If you are a tutor, talk to your student. They might be interested in participating in this event as well as doing some fundraising for the League. For those of you who decide to attend as well as get pledges, ENJOY! Remember, you don't have to walk or run in the event to get pledges. You can begin now getting pledges from family and friends, checks are made out to The Human Race, and bring them into the office. We'll do the rest!
2. **We are a member of eScrip.** If you are also a member, add the League (Group ID 500024540). If you are not, please consider becoming one. It's easy to do: [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com).
3. **We are still a member of Community Smart.** They have made some changes in their merchant list so be sure to take a look at their list of merchants. If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. Signing up is easy: [www.communitysmart.com](http://www.communitysmart.com).
4. **Ebay is another way to raise money for the League.** Do you have something hidden in your garage or closet that it's time to sell? We are registered with MissionFish and Ebay, so anyone can designate part or all of the proceeds of a sale to the League.
5. **We are registered with PayPal.** There is a link on our website so that individuals and businesses can easily make donations.
6. **Grants. It's often not what you know but who you know.** Many businesses in the community give grants and donations to local nonprofit organizations. If you know of one that will support the Adult Literacy League, *please* call the office.

## **CHANGE, CHANGE , and MORE CHANGE**

Over the last six months the Adult Literacy League has gone through a bunch of changes:

### **A MESSAGE FROM RUTH MALONEY**



photo John Fleming

After three years of serving the League as their Executive Director, it is time for me to retire. I cannot express the gratitude I feel for the experiences and people I have had the pleasure of working with over the past three years. It has truly been an honor to

serve the students, volunteers and the Board members of the Adult Literacy League and I wish the best for each of you. I have made many connections over the years and I will covet those relationships, as well as the memories, as I move forward to pursue new, personal endeavors.

When I first came to the League, we were at our Yolanda location being held together by a devoted employee named Bob Parsons. Although, I could see the need for office equipment and even a heater, Bob shined as the most professional and caring employee. I knew then what an honor it would be to work for the League. I then met the dedicated volunteers and listened to them as they spoke with pride on the many accomplishments that their students achieved. I was impressed with the tireless effort of our President, Karen Fleming, and our Board and was amazed how they could keep this organization up and running with such efficiency with little or no money.

The Adult Literacy League champions the power of Literacy to improve the lives of adults and their families here in Sonoma County for the last 40 years. English is the common tongue of our global village. Whether you live and work in an English speaking country, or need English for travel and fun, English is the passport to success and a deeper understanding of our quickly changing world.

### **GEORGE LENTINI**

Have you heard from George yet? If you haven't, you will. We have a new database (thanks to our Treasurer, Dan Jenkins), and George is verifying and updating all our information as he inputs the data, so he will be calling you. George is also helping with the day-to-day operation of the League .... Thank you George!

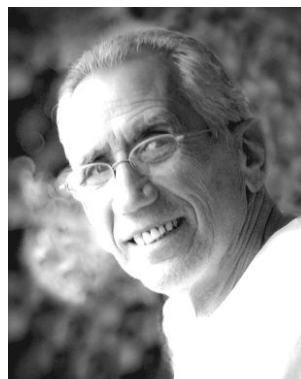


photo John Fleming

### **NANCY SCHELL AND ELEANOR WELCH**



photo Bob Parsons

Nancy and Eleanor have announced their retirement after seven years of conducting our tutor training workshops. WOW .... SEVEN YEARS! That says a lot about their commitment to the League and its mission. Thank you, Nancy and Eleanor, for all you have done for the League. Nancy and Eleanor's last training is April 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

In the future we will have two teams of trainers: Mallory Gerard and George Dancisak will be one team and Corrie McCluskey will be the second. *Welcome!*

### **NEW LOCATION**

**4908 Sonoma Highway, Suite B**

(That is just before the intersection with Middle Rincon Rd.)

The office moved twice in 2010. How did these moves affect the League? It took a lot of time to find office space and move, it took almost a month to resolve our telephone and email requirements; it was confusing to our volunteers; and the League went from paying no rent to \$500 each month for rent. That's a big deal.

## THANKS GIVING

*It is with a great deal of gratitude that the Board of Directors thanks all the tutors, mentors, volunteers, donators and sponsors for their time and support of the League. Without you, the League would not exist. In addition, the following individuals made valued contributions:*

- ❖ Rodgers Broomhead for your constant and ongoing support of the League. The League was awarded a \$500 grant from Santa Rosa East Rotary Club as a result of work Rodgers did on a grant.
- ❖ Barbara Fromm for promoting the League with the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties. We received a \$500 from their Sequoia Philanthropic Fund.
- ❖ Ruth Maloney for writing a grant for \$2,880 and the Exchange Bank for accepting it.
- ❖ Our fundraising effort at the end of last year raised \$5,000. Thank you everyone who donated.
- ❖ Catherine Barnard for subletting the offices on Montgomery Drive to the League at a discounted rate. You helped the League in more ways than you know.
- ❖ Ruth Maloney, Heather Thompson, Pat Lennon, and Karen Fleming for carefully packing our office for the move to Sonoma Highway.
- ❖ Ruth and John Maloney, Pat Lennon, Heather Thompson, Nancy Schell, Rafael Nunez Sr., William Pitney, and David Chung for moving and unpacking the office. What would we have done without John and Rafael's heavy lifting?
- ❖ A special "thank you" goes to Ruth Sanford. After 21 years of volunteering with the League, Ruth is retiring. Ruth, your students "thank you" and the board of directors "thank you", for all you have done for the League. You will be missed!

***In Memoriam*** ~ Judith Treanor and Charlotte Baird were two bright lights in the League. Charlotte was with the League 21 years and taught groups of students at the Knox Presbyterian Church. Judith was also a tutor for many years and helped with the Workplace Literacy Program. It's no surprise Judith designated the League as the beneficiary for memorial contributions.

### **Are you a 2011 member of the League?**

**If you aren't, please join the following members by donating now.**

*Marlene Alves*

*Charlotte Baird*

*Patricia Bauer*

*Julian Blair*

*Donna Brandt*

*Rodgers & Nancy*

*Broomhead*

*Lynn Camhi*

*Christina Cannon*

*Nancy Casazza*

*David Chung*

*Mary Crockenberg*

*Henry Culp*

*Joanne Dale*

*Jane Eide*

*Eleanor Flandermeyer*

*Frances Fleming*

*John & Karen Fleming*

*James Grau*

*Diane Hales*

*Junda Halper*

*Kierstine Hansen*

*Elizabeth Harrell*

*Harold Hill*

*Gary Holm*

*Steven Hubbard*

*Dan Jenkins*

*Dorothea Joos*

*Terry Cross Kaplan*

*Sandy Kriegsman*

*Vernel Lecheminant*

*Ardath Lee*

*Mary Logasa*

*Sandra Martensen*

*Leena Merritt*

*Jacque Mielke*

*Darlene Nemer*

*Rose Norris*

*James O'Hara*

*Patti O'Keefe*

*Bob Parsons*

*Richard Parry Jones*

*William Pitney*

*Eloise Powell*

*Lawrence Prager*

*Zhisheng Qi*

*Barbara Ramirez*

*Chamundi Sabanathan*

*Ruth Sanford*

*Nancy Schell*

*Muriel Smith*

*Winifred Swanson*

*Brenda Switzer*

*Heather Thompson*

*Ilene Traverso*

*Ellen Tyler*

*Hilda Walstrom*

*Alice Webb*

*Susan Winer*

*Katherine Wolf*

*Edith Wong*

*William Zaner*

## LOOKING AHEAD

### SPRING IN-SERVICE

DATE: Saturday, June 4, 2011

PLACE: Knox Presbyterian Church, 1650 W. Third St.  
(southeast corner at Stony Point Rd.)

TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

RSVP: Call 539-3848, or email to  
office@literacyleague.org (**Attendees only**)

**We heard you!** Many of your students need help with speaking and the sounds of the English language. You also had rave reviews after our In-Service with Gretchen Werner last year. So .....

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! Gretchen Werner is returning to help with new creative ideas that will help the learning process. Gretchen's focus will be on where sounds come from in our mouth and phonograms. This will be a valuable two hours whether you have a beginning student that is just learning how to speak English or advanced student that is working on speaking, reading and writing. The information presented will be new, so if you attended last year's In-Service with Gretchen, this is not a repeat.**



photo John Fleming

**Gretchen Werner, M.Ed.**, is owner and director of Werner Educational Services (formerly "Gateways, A Learning Center". Gretchen is with the North Bay Institute of Green Technology (employment readiness for at-risk and gang-affiliated youth in the green-collar jobs sector), Executive Board for the Sonoma County Literacy Coalition, Association of Educational Therapists, chair for the Windsor Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Committee, and a judge at the Healdsburg Science Fair. She is also a former member of the Board of Directors for the Adult Literacy League.

**Join us for an informative and fun morning!**

### TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

Our next workshop is July 23 and July 30. We have a long list of student's needing our help so if you have a relative, friend, or neighbor interested in becoming a volunteer tutor, have them call the office SOON on 539-3848.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 16, 30 – **Tutor Workshop**

May 7 – The Human Race

May 30 -- Closed for Holiday

June 4 – **In-Service for Tutors**

June 13 – Board Meeting

July 4 – Closed for Holiday

July 23, 30 – **Tutor Workshop**

August 8 – Board Meeting

September 5 – Closed for Holiday

September TBD – **In-Service for Tutors**

October 10 – Board Meeting

October 29/November 5 – **Tutor Workshop**

November 12 – Membership Meeting

November 24, 25 – Closed for Holiday

December 12 – Board Meeting

December 19-January 2 – Closed for Holiday

### **2011 Board of Directors**

**President**, Karen Fleming

**Treasurer**, Dan Jenkins

**Secretary**, Heather Thompson

**Director**, David Chung

**Director**, Robert Picker

**Director**, William Pitney

**Director**, Nancy Schell

### **2011 Committees & Volunteers**

**Librarian**: Darlene Pacheco

**Nominating Committee**: Rodgers Broomhead

**Publicity**: Vacant

**Outreach**: Heather Thompson

**Mentor Coordinator**: Pat Lennon

**Student Coordinator**: Darlene Pacheco

**Tutor Coordinator**: Robert Picker

**Tax Accountant**: Susan Winer

**Fundraising Committee**: David Chung, Karen Fleming,  
Heather Thompson, Ruth Maloney

**Tutor Workshops**: Nancy Schell and Eleanor Welch

**Webmaster**: Dan Jenkins

If you need to contact our Board of Directors or anyone in a committee or volunteer position, please call the office (707.539.3848) or email at office@literacyleague.org

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Adult Literacy League of Sonoma County, Inc.

4908 Sonoma Highway, Suite B  
Santa Rosa, CA 95409  
707.539.3848 (ph) 707.539.3899 (fax)  
office@literacyleague.org  
www.literacyleague.org

#### Office Hours:

**Open** 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday  
**Closed** Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays

**Administrative Coordinator:** George Lentini  
**A.L.L. Star Editor:** Karen Fleming

**Wish List** → Paper Shredder

#### Please Don't Forget

to report your monthly hours to the League office!  
Fax, e-mail, phone, or snail mail — they A.L.L. work.

#### Tutor Tip

For students to begin absorbing the sound system and intonation of our language, be sure to read to them each session. Ask them to bring something to be read. Discuss it afterwards. Reading the language will help them read with the right tempo.



ADULT LITERACY  
**LEAGUE** of SONOMA COUNTY, INC

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Santa Rosa CA 95407

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