

ADULT LITERACY COMMUNITY

Quarterly articles, features, and highlights



Beaver and 7th Street



5th and E Street



4th and E Street

Spring Around Central Library

It has been a pleasure to notice all the life renewing itself this Spring. The photos on the front of this issue (volume 10 already!) were taken one beautiful morning in March in the blocks near our Literacy Office location at Central Santa Rosa Library, 211 E Street, Santa Rosa. There I was walking to work like any other morning, and suddenly there was all this beauty and inspiration surrounding me, just waiting to be noticed and appreciated.

Meanwhile, inside Central Library's Adult Literacy Office, inspiration comes from co-workers, volunteer tutors and adult learners. It was energizing and extremely helpful to spend time with the many tutors who attended the March 19 Tutor Meet-Up Training (page 4). And it was a pleasure getting to know a few of our adult learners better when they joined us for our new *Let's Craft in English* get together in February and March (page 5).

I hope you too find inspiration in the growth and progress you are making with your learning partner, in the stories and information featured in this issue, and in the season all around us.

Thank You and Happy Spring,

A. Adams

**Adult Literacy Supervisor
Sonoma County Library**

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **HIGHLIGHTS**
- **GLOSSARY**
- **INTERVIEWS**
- **IDIOMS**
- **STUDENT WRITING**
- **AND MORE!**

American Culture Corner

Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by Earthday.org and is observed by over 1 billion people in more than 193 countries. The official theme for Earth Day 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics."



Glossary

Broadway: (Broadway musical theater) live performance **genre** and theater locations in New York city

genre: a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content

Tony Award: recognizes excellence in live Broadway theater

spontaneous: arising from natural feeling

compelling: demanding attention, convincing

style icon: individual whose style choices inspire and influence fashion culture

founded: started or began something, often a business

geriatric: old, elderly

collage (of images): various cut-out pictures or materials are combined and glued together to create a new picture or composition

carpentry: art and skilled trade of cutting and working with wood

cannery: factory for canning goods

chores: routine tasks — especially household ones

program: a television show

commercials: advertisements that play during television shows

hosting: receiving or entertaining guests

brunch: a meal between breakfast and lunch, typically eaten around 11:00 AM

Zumba: Latin-inspired dance workout

telenovelas: Latin American **soap operas**

soap opera: a long-running television series typically runs during the day time

court commissioner: appointed by the judges of the court to act as a temporary judge

intrusive: marked by being too nosy, forceful, or pushy

procrastinate: to wait until the last minute to complete something

condemned: pronounced guilty and sentenced to punishment

feat: an act that takes skill and endurance

odyssey: a long or wandering journey

labor leader: a leader of a workers' movement

Who Were They?

Chita Rivera was one of the first “great triple threat” talents of **Broadway** for her ability to: dance, sing and act. She became famous playing the part of Anita in the original Broadway production of *West Side Story*.

She went on to perform in more than twenty Broadway musicals, earn three **Tony Awards**, become the first Latina/Latino American to receive a Kennedy Center Honor and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Chita Rivera died in January 2024 at age 91.

She "was everything Broadway was meant to be," says Laurence Mason, a producer of the series *Broadway: The American Musical*. "She was **spontaneous** and **compelling** and talented as hell for decades and decades on Broadway. Once you saw her, you never forgot her."



Chita Rivera, 1933 - 2024



Iris Apfel, 1921 - 2024

Iris Apfel became a world famous **style icon** in her 80s when her unique personal wardrobe and costume jewelry collection were featured in a first-of-its-kind show by The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in 2005.

Prior to fame later in life, Iris and her husband Carl **founded** Old World Weavers, a successful interior design business focused on fabrics and

furniture restoration. They traveled the world, collecting, choosing, and discovering textiles for their work.

Nine U.S. Presidents lived with some of the Apfel's designs at the White House. Carl Apfel died in 2015 at the age of 100. Iris died in March 2024 at 102 years of age. She is the author of: *Iris Apfel, Accidental Icon: Musings of a Geriatric Starlet*. Her life is also the subject of the 2014 documentary film: *Iris*. Both of these are available to check out for free from the Sonoma County Library.

Tutor Meetup!

Thank you to all the tutors who were able to join us for our March Tutor Meetup. We reviewed the upcoming goals report, lesson planning, and resources available in the Adult Literacy collection. Tutors had the opportunity to talk and support one another in program-specific groups (Adult Literacy or English Language Partners) about their tutoring challenges and successes.

Save the date for these future Tutor Meetup Trainings (lunch provided) to be held at Central Santa Rosa Library:

- **June (to be announced)**
- **September 18, 2024 from 1 - 3 PM**



Photos clockwise from top left: 1) Tutors seated at English Language Partners (ELP) table in foreground and Adult Literacy Partners (ALP) table in background. 2) Literacy Associate Joe at podium and ELP tutors. 3) Literacy Associate Christine, tutor Laura S., Literacy Specialist Leti in background. 4) ALP tutor table.

Get To Know Learner James Heard



James Heard

What is your perfect day?

It would be sunny and bright. I would take a drive to Bodega Bay for the scenery, and just look at the ocean or do some fishing. I've seen whales spouting there.

What music do you like?

Rock and roll, and I love blues—a little jazz, but I'm more of a blues person. And I like country. I like James Brown, Jerry Butler, and Charley Pride.

What was the proudest moment in your life?

When my daughter got married, I felt good about it. I jokingly told my son-in-law: He had to wrestle with me and if he won, I said he could marry her.

What was your first (or your favorite) job?

My best job was **carpentry**. I liked the challenge of it and I learned something every day—it wasn't work for me; I would have done it for free. My first real job was working at a **cannery** putting cans in boxes. I also picked fruit.

Why did you want to join the tutoring program?

I just got tired of having everybody read for me. If I went places, I couldn't read the signs. I was missing out on everything, not being able to do things by myself.

What do you like about tutoring?

It challenges me, which I enjoy. Sometimes I start reading, and I have to read it again since I didn't get it right. I might get so focused on what I'm reading, I lose track of time. I even set a timer to remind me of **chores** I need to do, but if I like the story I turn off the timer and keep reading. Usually I read an hour in the morning, but at night I read for two or three hours.

What has been your biggest challenge in the Adult Literacy program?

Learning to read feels really hard. I can't get the vowel sounds down so I'm going to practice that all weekend. I'm learning how to sound out words, and am just focused on finishing the story. I read it a couple times to get the meaning. Sometimes I pick up a new word each time I read something. My tutor also gives me a topic and I write about it, or I answer questions in a workbook about the story I just read.

What is your proudest accomplishment in the program?

When I started with Midge, my tutor, I could only read a few words. I couldn't read or write a sentence. But now I'm reading books and writing paragraphs.

Has tutoring changed your life in any way?

When I go to stores now, I can read the signs or the words on products. Wherever you look, you're always looking at words, even on television such as a **program** called "Catfish." I could read "Cat" before but not the whole word, but I can read it now. I look at the **commercials** a lot: some of them have writing and I try to read along now.

What is your advice to other adult learners about achieving their goals?

If you want to do it, just stick with it and you can accomplish it. It's like anything else, such as stopping smoking or drinking, you just have to do it. I read every day so I can make progress faster. My favorite story I've read so far was about Will Rogers, a cowboy, actor, and comedian, and I also read a book about Muhammad Ali, champion boxer who inspired me.

Get To Know Tutor Cynthia Denenholz



Cynthia Denenholz

What do you like to do in springtime?

My favorite thing is to celebrate Easter with my family. I find joy in **hosting** Easter **brunch**, coloring eggs, and watching my seven grandchildren and friends hunt for them on a glorious Sonoma County day. I also love reading outside as the weather warms up—it makes me feel like I'm on vacation in my own yard.

What are some of your personal interests?

I like to exercise: dance, especially **Zumba**, swim, walk, and occasionally bike. I'm learning Spanish and take classes, read books, and watch **telenovelas** in Spanish. My husband and I travel whenever we can, and recently returned from a cruise through the Panama Canal.

What is your favorite book?

Two wonderful books are *March* by Geraldine Brooks and *Slavery by Another Name* by Douglas A. Blackmon.

What motivated you to join the tutoring program?

As a **court commissioner**, I encountered women whose greatest shame was not being able to read. I intended to volunteer with the Jail's literacy program when I retired. When that application turned out to be too **intrusive**, I applied for the Adult Literacy one-to-one learning partners tutoring program.

What is your professional background, and do any of those skills help you with being an Adult Literacy tutor?

I was a telephone operator, an attorney, and a court commissioner. Having good English grammar and editing skills and being well-organized have helped me with tutoring. The most important "skill" I possess is a love of reading and learning, which I share with my student.

What do you like about tutoring an adult learner?

My favorite thing is to applaud Martha's enthusiasm, determination, and many successes.

What has been your biggest challenge as a tutor?

My biggest challenge is to stay focused on Martha's goals, as she has many interests that she likes to explore during our sessions. I also **procrastinate** in completing the monthly reports.

What have you and your learner accomplished that makes you the most proud?

Our proudest moment was when Martha read her essay from the *Arrivals and Departures* book at its release event, with her husband in the audience. We were also excited when Martha's essay *My Balance* was accepted by *The Change Agent* for its November 2023 issue. The essay was published and she was awarded a \$50 gift card!

Has tutoring changed your adult learner's life?

I believe that participation in the Adult Literacy Program has given Martha more confidence, not only in reading and communicating in English, but in confirming that she can reach her goals and has an important place in the world.

What is your advice to other tutors?

Martha has told me and the Adult Literacy staff that she remains more engaged when our activities are varied. In addition to reading and writing, we watch YouTube grammar videos, use EnglishforEveryone.org and other worksheets, access literacy websites, and search the internet for everything from children's activities to important events in U.S. history.

Where Are They Now?



A former learner in our program, Alex, voted in the U.S. for the first time this past election. What a proud and momentous day!

Tutors and Learners: Is there something you can do now that you weren't able to do when you started tutoring? Share it with us so we can celebrate and feature it in the newsletter!

Send submissions (with pictures) to: literacy@sonomalibrary.org,
Subject: Now I Can

Check Out the **Adult New Reader Collection**

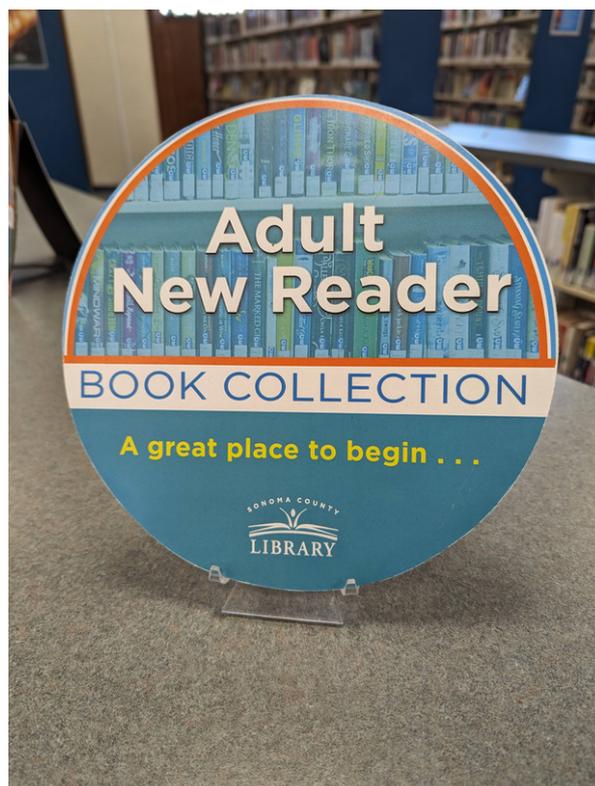
Looking for a good read? Our Library's Adult New Reader (ANR) Collection has books specifically chosen for adults building reading skills. To see the complete collection in our online catalog, go to: <https://sonomalibrary.org/visit/locations/adultliteracy/newadultreader>

This collection consists of high-interest books for adults who are new readers. ANR includes popular fiction and non-fiction titles by current and well-known authors in many styles and subject areas.

The collection includes titles from the Book Shots series, the Rapid Reads series, and similar fiction series with shorter page counts.

The Adult NEW Reader Collection: A great place to begin...

- Experience great stories at your own pace
- Explore popular stories by best-selling authors
- Find eBooks and eAudio books online by scanning this QR code:



Student Writing

Letter to Henry Charrière

Author of the book *Papillon*

Mr. Henri Charrière,

I am reading your book *Papillon*, for the second time. It's extraordinary!

Who can live in a prison, **condemned** for life for something he did not commit?

In a large part of the book it is not *Papillon* in prison or escaping, it's me. The way it is described, makes us feel the same desperation or frustration, and at the same time we never lose faith and optimism in the possibility of escaping.

Each escape attempt, each experience of desperation, hunger and pain, makes us feel the same helplessness and at the same time the thought of freedom so close and far, gives us strength and hope.

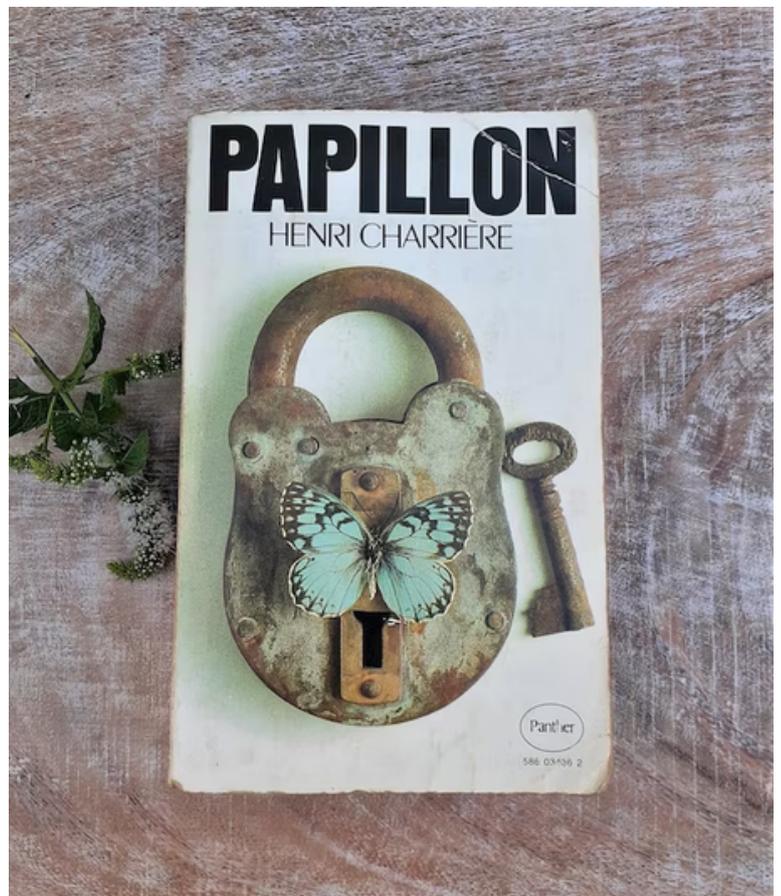
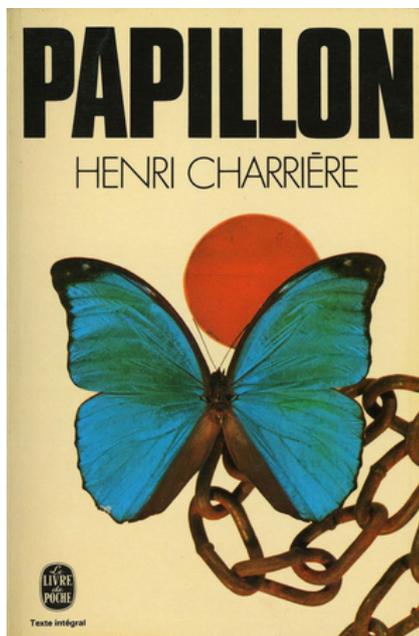
Auguste Le Breton writes about this book: "The greatest **feat** of all time."

The **odyssey** of an innocent man to pursue what he should never have lost: His freedom.

Thank you for putting on paper what you experienced first hand.

Sincerely,

S.M.



Celebrate Your Work Together

All entries generated from tutor reports -
THANK YOU!

- My learner interviewed for professional jobs at two banks and received an offer from one of them. She is now working as a banker.
- We finished *The Other Einstein: A Novel* and have started *Black Cake: A Novel*. I prepare and drop off questions for her before our next meeting and we use these to frame our discussion.
- She wrote her letter for the Writer-to-Writer challenge project, rewrote it, and submitted it!
- I wrote an essay about my own background but I included many errors. She readily accepted the challenge and did quite a good job of finding most of my mistakes.
- She finished reading *Breaking Through*, the third of Francisco Jimenez's stories about his growing up! We requested the fourth and last book in the series, *Taking Hold*, from the library.
- She is listening to stories and songs in English while she exercises and she says she is understanding English better more and more.
- My learner likes this "Diary of..." series and has done some reading on her own and has good comprehension of people and events.
- She enrolled in the ESL culinary program at the Santa Rosa Junior College.
- Learner attended one of the learner meetups hosted by Adult Literacy for English learners and found it very helpful to speak with others. I can tell she's gaining more confidence when speaking English.
- Some of her English-speaking family members are saying that her spoken English is improving...she is proud!

In honor of Women's History Month and Cesar Chavez day — both were in March 2024 — we wanted to share this information, which is part of Adult Literacy learner Elizabeth S.'s *Dolores Huerta Project*:

Dolores Clara Fernández Huerta is an American **labor leader** and civil rights activist who, with Cesar Chavez, is a co-founder of the United Farmworkers Association, which later merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee to become the United Farm Workers. Dolores Huerta is 93 years old.

How does Dolores Huerta inspire you?

What inspired me about Dolores Huerta was her courage and how she had so much influence and power not only in the government, but also with the people she helped: to ensure that their lives, their health, and their rights were respected.



Dolores Huerta at age 92

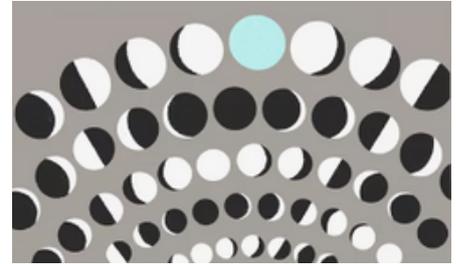
Idioms

Each newsletter, we will bring you a new English idiom.

Once in a blue moon

(refers to something which does not happen very often)

Sara and Jeremy are trying to save money for their upcoming wedding, so they only go out to eat **once in a blue moon**.



What's Cooking?

Have a favorite recipe or food related story to share? Send it to literacy@sonomalibrary.org

My Sweet Empanadas

By Lupita Ochoa

Ingredients:

(dough)

- 1 pound butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- One and one-half
tablespoon baking powder
- 7 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

(filling)

- 4 cups milk
- One-half can sweetened
condensed milk
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 and one-half package
vanilla maizena (found in
Mexican grocery stores)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

(equipment)

- Tortilla press

Directions:

Make Filling: Dissolve contents of maizena envelope in 1 cup cold milk, then stir cold-milk mixture into 3 cups of boiling milk. Add sweetened condensed milk, cinnamon stick and vanilla. Boil for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and let cool.

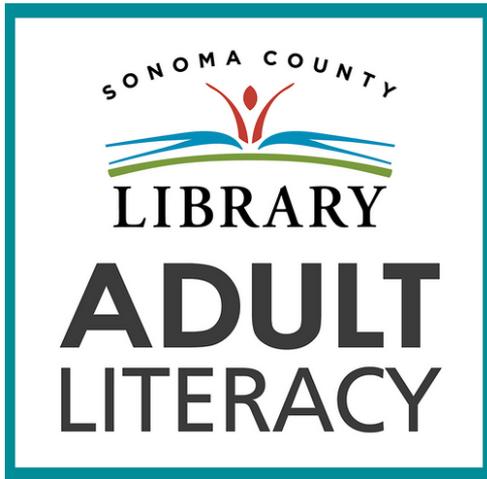
Make empanada dough: In a bowl, mix the butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla for 5 minutes. Then add the flour and baking powder in little by little and mix with your hands as you add. When the dough no longer sticks in your hands, it is ready.

Shape some dough into a one-and-a-half-inch or two-inch ball and place in the tortilla press and push down. Remove flattened dough and put the cooled filling in the middle of the circle of dough.

Fold the dough over the filling (fold in half). Use the tines of a fork to push down and seal the outside edges of the dough where they meet.

Bake the empanadas in a pre-heated 350 degree oven for 20 minutes. Let the empanadas cool and then: Enjoy your empanadas.

This story was originally featured in our 2017 Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Collection: Bringing Our Stories to the Table and has been edited to fit this space.



Adult Literacy Office

Our office is located inside the Central Santa Rosa Library, 2nd floor
211 E Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Adult Literacy Hours

Our office is open Monday - Friday
10 AM - 3 PM

You can reach us at (707) 544-2622 or literacy@sonomalibrary.org

How to Submit Your Work

Submissions to the Adult Literacy Community newsletter are welcome! We cannot guarantee publication, and materials cannot be returned. Please include your name, address, and phone number. Student writings and photos can be sent by email to: literacy@sonomalibrary.org

How to Get Involved

New Learners: Call 707-544-2622

New Tutors: Call to preregister for and upcoming new tutor orientation:

Monday, April 8, 2024

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Ongoing Classes Open to All:

Join our Conversation Classes for practice speaking English at all levels. Classes take place on Zoom on the following days:

Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Thursdays 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Find and register for classes at

sonomalibrary.org/conversation

Upcoming Library Holidays 2024:

April 1 - Library Closed - Cesar Chavez Day (observed)

May 27 - Library Closed - Memorial Day

June 19 - Library Closed - Juneteenth

July 4 - Library Closed - Independence Day