



OPENING THE WORLD THROUGH WORDS

Literacy Matters

A Quarterly Newsletter Presented by

Oakland Literacy Council

Winter 2015/2016



**“JANUARY 1ST IS THE FIRST BLANK PAGE OF A 365 BOOK.
WRITE A GOOD ONE!” BRAD PAISLEY**

The calendar is a constant reminder that we are swiftly coming to the end of 2015 and anticipating the many possibilities in 2016. Looking at our past *Literacy Matters* newsletters makes it clear that 2015 was a banner year filled with the many accomplishments our amazing students achieved and the continued hard work of our incredible VOLUNTEER tutors. We also participated in a host of activities including field trips, workshops International Pot-Lucks, conversation groups, Bookstock, Leon and Lulu's, Barnes and Nobles, Breakfast Club, Ex Libris and so much more. We said “goodbye” to staff members, significantly increased our graduate rate, welcomed new board members, garnered a moving television segment on WDIV, and met people who changed our lives. All this while continuing our mission of making reading accessible for everyone.

As the Oakland Literacy Council enters its 32 year, you might ask what do we hope for in 2016? That's easy....to continue to provide the very best in reading, and listening comprehension instruction so that we create a culture of life long learning. And that “gift” is shared with others.

*“Learning is a
treasure which
accompanies its
owner everywhere.”*

Anonymous



*Enjoy this abbreviated
version of
“Literacy Matters”
and have a safe and
happy New Year!*

Judy Lindstrom

TRADITION |TRƏ'DIʃHƏN|

NOUN

THE TRANSMISSION OF CUSTOMS OR BELIEFS FROM
GENERATION TO GENERATION

Reprinted from *Business Insider*, December 31, 2013

Happy New Year's Eve! Many of you will celebrate with champagne, dancing, and kissing your loved ones when the clock strikes midnight. But what about the rest of the world?

January 1st may be the de facto beginning of the New Year in the Western hemisphere thanks to the Gregorian calendar, but some cultures believe the New Year takes place at a different time altogether.

How people start off a brand new year varies regionally from country to country — though most do tend to have the standard fireworks display.

Spain, they eat 12 grapes for luck. Spaniards eat a grape with each of the twelve chimes of the midnight countdown while making a wish. The tradition dates back to 1895 when some savvy vine farmers realized they had a surplus of grapes and started the tradition to get more customers.

In Belgium, children write New Year's letters to their parents. New Year's Eve is called Sint Sylvester Vooravond. Belgian children write New Year's letters to their parents or godparents then decorate the cards with fancy paper complete with cherubs, angels, and colored roses and read them aloud.

In Greece, people hang an onion on their doors. It's believed that hanging an onion, or "kremmida" on your door on New Year's eve is a symbol of rebirth in the coming year.

In Denmark, people eat a really huge cake...and throw dishes. People in Denmark prepare an evening meal that ends with a special dessert known as Kransekage, a steep-sloped cone-shaped cake decorated with fire crackers and flags. Also, it is thought that throwing dishes on someone's doorstep on January 1st assures they will have many friends in the year ahead.

In Japan, it is believed the God of the New Year comes down to Earth. On New Year's Eve in Japan, Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times to welcome Toshigami, the New Year's God.

In Estonia, they eat up to 12 meals that night. Some people in Estonia believe that they should eat seven, nine, or twelve meals on New Year's Eve. With each meal consumed, it is believed that the person gains the strength of that many men the following year. You don't eat the entire meal, however — part of the meal is left unfinished for the spirits or ancestors who visit the house on New Year's Eve.

In Finland, people tell one another's fortunes with melted "tin." A Finnish new year tradition is called molybdomancy, which is the act of telling New Year's fortunes by melting "tin" (actually lead) in a tiny pan on the stove and then quickly throwing it into a bucket of cold water. The blob of metal is then analyzed in the candlelight to see what fate will befall the person in the New Year.

In Macedonia, people celebrate New Year's Eve twice. In Macedonia, New Year's Eve is celebrated both on December 31st as well as on January 14 according to the Macedonian Orthodox (also known as the Lunar) Calendar.

In Ecuador, people burn effigies of their enemies at midnight. In Ecuador, thousands of life-size dummies representing misfortunes from the past year are burned in the streets.

In Argentina, people eat beans on New Year's Eve for good luck in the year ahead. People believe that eating beans before the clock strikes midnight means they will have good luck in their careers in the year ahead.

OLC Learnings Continue Overseas

Some ESL students of the Oakland Literacy Council live in the United States for several years due to work assignments or family situations. During their time here and as students of OLC, they learn English language and American customs. When these particular students leave Oakland County, they go to various other locations i.e., their native country, other parts of the U.S. and other countries. With them they take the English they have learned through OLC.

One such story shared by a tutor exemplifies how English learned at OLC goes on long past the one-on-one tutoring sessions. Recently, tutor **Robin Kaufman** received an email from her former student **Nobuko Hirano** advising Robin she had obtained a job upon her return to Tokyo. Nobuko was so excited to tell Robin that she was working in an English Café called Hello Café. The establishment promotes an environment where customers can practice using English. Nobuko emailed that “there are American stuff and many American customers come! I am really enjoying!!” She sent Robin a link to the YouTube video about the café. Nobuko was included in the video. Robin was thrilled to receive the update and said “I’m so proud of her.” Check out the video on YouTube at the following link <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxr8NLU5vml&feature=youtu.be>.



What do a famous actress, a famous musician and a famous body builder turned actor turned governor have in common? English is not their native language... but they shared similar tips that they followed to learn and celebrate English.

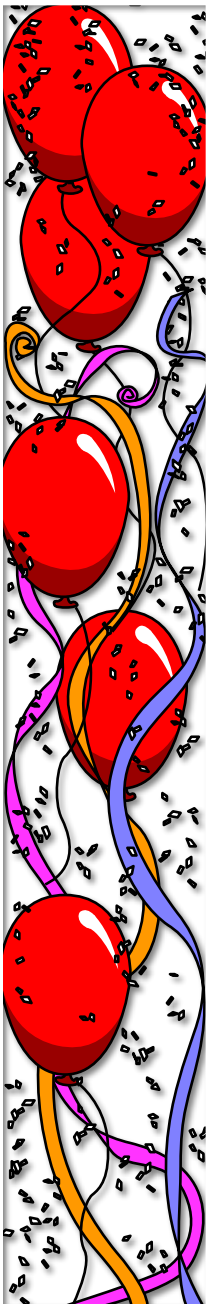
Spanish born actress **Penelope Cruz** said that she will be a “life long learner”, she will continue to be “dedicated”, and “learn from her mistakes”.

Colombian singer **Shakira** said that she will “persevere”, “immerse myself in English” and “continue to set new goals”.

Finally, Austrian born man of all trades, Arnold Schwarzenegger, said “With hard work and determination, and because the American people were so generous and welcoming, I have succeeded beyond my wildest imagination.”

Oakland Literacy Council

Student Goal Achievements August — October 2015



August 2015	GL went to Social Security Office, filled out forms and obtained a Social Security Number.
August 2015	NM completed two job applications.
August 2015	MK got a library card and checked out her first book.
August 2015	MK received her driver's license.
August 2015	SH attended a Broadway play and was able to understand the dialogue and plot.
August 2015	JK discovered and is comfortable ordering take out/carry out food from a restaurant.
August 2015	LA read My Secret Garden in one morning as she loved the book.
August 2015	SL passed the TOEFL exam.
August 2015	IT completed reading a chapter book on Harriet Tubman.
September 2015	VP wrote a letter on behalf of her parents so that they could visit the U.S. from Vietnam.
September 2015	NF read English book to her 5 year old son for the first time
September 2015	WL obtained her work permit.
September 2015	LM read a children's book to her grandchild.
September 2015	WG read through a new cell phone plan and signed up with the carrier.
September 2015	KR started the Otech program (Oakland Technical Center)
September 2015	KR obtained his driver's license.
September 2015	KR obtained a library card.
September 2015	AM got a job after two English interviews (one via Skype).
September 2015	MH got a job.
October 2015	YK passed the CGFNS (Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools) exam.
October 2015	NF read English books to her 5 year old son.
October 2015	AL met with her son's teacher alone for the first time.
October 2015	VL received her learner's permit.
October 2015	WS passed the written portion of the driver's license test.
October 2015	RK can now read an entire edition of Reader's Digest.
October 2015	SL passed the CNA exam (Certified Nursing Assistant)

Country Spotlight: Poland



Country:	Poland
Location:	Europe
Capital:	Warsaw
Population:	38,500,000
Size:	120, 726 square miles (about the size of New Mexico)
Primary Language:	Polish. Smaller ethnic groups may speak their own languages. Although Polish was banned during partition periods, Poles around the world preserved it as a matter of patriotism. Until 1989, Russian was taught but it fell out of favor. English and German are the most popular second languages.
Climate:	The climate is temperate, with mild summers; however, it is susceptible to extreme temperature variations within short periods of time. Winters are generally cold, and precipitation is common throughout the year.
Greetings:	Adult males and teenagers usually greet each other with a handshake. Women usually kiss or shake hands upon meeting. Close friends greet by kissing the right, left, and then right cheeks. At social and business gatherings, Poles greet each guest personally, women first. A man might kiss the hand of an older or younger woman, but not the hand of a woman near his age.
Gestures	Poles frequently gesticulate while conversing, whether to emphasize a point or to express emotion. Pointing is impolite. Poles hold both thumbs in closed fists to wish others good luck. Blinking both eyes can signify romantic interest. Winking one eye indicates that the words just spoken are not quite true or may be a joke.
Eating:	Poles generally eat breakfast between 6:30 and 8:00 a.m. Many people eat a second breakfast around 10:00 a.m. Some families gather for the main meal at 3:00 p.m. and enjoy the lighter evening meal (coffee or tea and sweet rolls) between 6:00 and 8:30 p.m. Poles eat in the continental style, with the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right. They keep both hands (but not the elbows) above the table during the meal.
Holidays:	Official holidays include New Year's Day, Easter (two days), Labor Day (May 1), Constitution Day (May 3), Corpus Christi (in May or June), All Saints' Day (Nov 1), Independence Day (Nov 11) and Christmas. On All Saints' Day, people decorate cemeteries with flowers and candles in memory of family, friends and military members. Christmas is the most important holiday. On December 6, children receive small gifts from St. Nicholas. Then on Christmas Eve, the family gathers for a 12 course meatless meal that usually includes fresh fish, dishes featuring poppy seeds or mushrooms and other traditional foods. Christmas Day is a quiet holiday spent with immediate family.

Student **Krzysztof Piatek** shares details about Mazury a district in north eastern Poland. He says Mazury is very similar to Michigan. It has many lakes and is wooded like Michigan. The weather is also similar.

Krzysztof also shares that as a young student, he and others at the time were forced to learn Russian in public schools. Some people hired tutors to learn English, French or German.

Boguslawa Piatek says there are many beautiful older cities with castles. Many buildings and castles were damaged in the world wars but have been rebuilt. The ones she especially remembers were in Krakov and Lancut (near where she is from). where she is from).



From the Water Cooler



When will my student be tested next? What should we do in preparation for the testing?

Students are tested one to two times a year based upon several factors. The first mark is completion of 40 or more instructional hours counting from July 1 (the beginning of the 2015 – 2016 program year). Other factors used to determine when to test are when the student was last tested, their grade levels and the consistency of their monthly hours.

The OLC office will contact the student to schedule testing based upon the monthly review of hours. The tutor will be emailed when the testing is scheduled.

It is a good idea to discuss and remind your student that they will be tested. While testing can make people anxious, it is our intent to make the process comfortable so the student can do their best.

There is no specific test preparation that needs to occur in advance of the testing. The regular tutoring session where reading and/or listening comprehension is practiced will prepare the student for permanently acquiring higher levels of reading and listening comprehension. Any tutoring exercises and consistent practice by the student that reinforce the comprehension will be of benefit and reflect in the testing results. Other questions about testing can be directed to the office.

Hungry Tutors Fed

In September, OLC offered a workshop for tutors called “What’s App.” While there were a few tutors that came with empty stomachs hoping to sample some delicious appetizers, the group was fed with information about Apps to enhance their tutoring sessions.

The lively discussion was led by **Joan Allessee**, tutor and tutor trainer. Joan facilitated the discussion amongst tutors eager to share and learn how to use Android and Apple Apps as tutoring tools. During the workshop, tutors practiced using the Apps as recommended by their fellow tutors. From this workshop, the group came up with some recommended Apps listed below.

There are many other Apps available. Hopefully, this list whets your appetite leaving you hungry for more exploration with your student.

<u>Play Store Android</u>	<u>Apple iTunes Store</u>
Manythings.org	Word Me Name the Word
English Conversation	American English Pronunciation
Listen English	How to Pronounce
Standard Hello	English Pronunciation
Speaking Wizard for Koreans	Voice Recorder
	Crosswords Puzzler
	5LittleClues
	Puzzaz



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OUR MISSION: HELP OUR TROOPS CALL HOME

WWW.CELLPHONESFORSOLDIERS.COM

OLC Recycles Old Cell Phones for Soldiers

During the 2015 giving season, if you are lucky enough to receive a new cell phone please consider recycling your old cell phone. Oakland Literacy Council is a drop off site for used cell phones in conjunction with Cell Phones For Soldiers Inc. Cell phones can be dropped off at OLC during regular office hours.

Cell Phones for Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist at the ages of 12 and 13. The charity has since provided more than 210 million minutes of free talk time to servicemen and women stationed around the world through its calling card program, Minutes That Matter. Funds raised from the recycling of cellular phones are used to purchase prepaid international calling cards. On average, Cell Phones For Soldiers distributes 3,200 calling cards each week to bases around the world, care package programs, deployment ceremonies and VA hospitals.

Donated phones are sent to Mindful eCycling for recycling. For every donated phone valued at \$5, Cell Phones For Soldiers is able to provide two and a half hours of free talk time to deployed troops. Approximately half of the phones Mindful eCycling processes are reconditioned and reused. Phones and components that cannot be refurbished are dismantled and responsibly recycled.

By donating to Cell Phones For Soldiers, residents can provide a lifeline for America's bravest. For more information, please visit www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

Please Consider

Before the clock strikes midnight on December 31st, please consider this for your New Year's Resolution

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"I _____ (fill in the blank) resolve to spearhead a "Help Spread the Word" campaign for Oakland Literacy Council. After all, I'm familiar with their mission, their good deeds and how effective they are in the community. I will let people know that tutors are always needed, and that we are here to help adults reach their literacy goals.

