

NEWSLETTER

Mountain Plains Adult Education Association

ARIZONA COLORADO IDAHO MONTANA NEVADA NEW MEXICO UTAH WYOMING

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President's Message – Myna Frestedt, Arizona

It's that time of year when holidays surround us, and we find ourselves being busier than expected. For me, it seems that everything that started in January has since waited to be resolved or reactivated this month. Of course, it all needs to be done as soon as possible. Even though an academic or fiscal year doesn't usually end until June, December makes its own demands, not to mention our best intentions and New Year's resolutions are right around the corner.

News from the MPAEA board members is that our **2008 conference in Salt Lake City** will be packed with wonderful opportunities for everyone in adult education. A strong corrections strand will be present, and there will be sessions for adult education graduate students doing research. Gary Conti will head up the graduate studies strand. He has also helped our *Journal* to be included in ProQuest, an online service for the reproduction of articles for research. We'll have sessions in ABE and ESL, continuing education, and human resources. Mark your calendars and get ready to explore some "endless possibilities."

Nationwide, and regionally, adult education is undergoing change. As MPAEA responds to these changes, we will take steps toward "going online" in many ways. Look for some good alternatives to our traditional newsletter, journal, and member services. MPAEA's new website is being reconstructed to provide the board and members more personalized forms of access. Look for the changes. If you haven't already done so, please send us your email address. You can mail me directly at myna.frestedt@central.az.edu.

MPAEA has strong, vibrant leadership entering and already in place on our executive and general boards. I'd like to introduce two of note: *Scott Baker*, our newest board member from Colorado, and *Kelsee Miller*, MPAEA President-Elect.

Scott has worked as an educator in rural southwest Colorado and as an ESL Coordinator and college teacher in central California. He taught in post-secondary and university settings for twenty years. In 2003 he turned to Adult Education full time, and has since concentrated on ABE in correctional facilities. Recently, he led programs at the Southern Ute Detention Center, doing curricular and pedagogical redesign of ABE/GED for Native Americans. Besides doing work in transitional, workplace learning, and career counseling, he does vocational courses, technology

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classes, family literacy, and fundraising. He was the 2007 recipient of the Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA) Teacher of the Year Award. Welcome to the board, Scott.

Kelsee will step into the president's office at the end of conference in April. She is an adult basic education/ GED instructor at Casper College who enjoys working with people, especially students. She calls her work "rewarding and energizing." She admires her students for how they overcome obstacles and continue to pursue an education despite many difficulties. She finds them to be "truly inspirational." As passionate a teacher as she is, I know that she will make an equally passionate leader for MPAEA. Her students have "hearts of gold," and she will find the same among the cadre of current and past leadership in the association. I look forward to working with her when I am past president. She is dynamic, optimistic, and focused. She received the Award of Commendation and the President's Award from the Wyoming Lifelong Learning Association (WLLA) in 2006. She was the president of WLLA from 2003-2005 and is currently secretary for that association. With everything else going on in her busy schedule, she is also working on a Master's degree.

Each of our states faces new pressures and demands in program administration, funding, shifts in accountability, and professional development. It is in these times that the local associations in the Mountain Plains region need to work together. Past leadership in the association has helped to established rich traditions and has provided continuing excellence throughout our region. Let us not lose sight of these contributions. Continue to support MPAEA with conference attendance and membership. I look forward to seeing you all in Salt Lake City. **Links to Conference activities can be found on www.mpaea.org . Make your plans now!**

Submissions for March Newsletter

Please submit state articles and items of interest to Peggy Nelson at pnelson@citc.edu by February 20th.

In Memoriam

Lenora Dean Damron Plothow, former Utah UAACCE President and Board member, passed away at age 70 on Nov.22. Lenora was a great proponent of adult, continuing, and community education. She will be missed by all of her constituents and colleagues throughout the region. Condolences may be sent to www.bergmortuary.com .

News from Utah: Corrections Workshop: A Prelude to the MPAEA Conference

Submitted by Pauleen Stephenson, Assistant Principal, Central Utah Academy, Utah State Prison, Gunnison

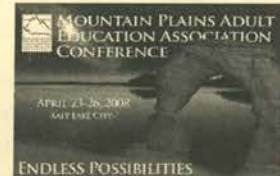
Over eighty correctional officers, educators, and adult education professionals met on

October 19, 2007 at Fred F. House Training Academy in Draper, Utah, for a full-day corrections workshop sponsored by the Utah Association for Adult, Community and Continuing Education (UAACCE).

A panel of experts representing the Utah State Department of Corrections, Utah State Office of Education, and South Park and Central Utah academies led a lively discussion about the value and future of education in correctional settings. Participants asked a variety of questions regarding the distribution of correctional education funds among county jails and state prison education sites, and the many challenges caused by housing moves.

Following the panel discussion, participants attended breakout sessions that focused on curriculum and security matters. Presenters included correctional educators from South Park and Central Utah academies, along with correctional officers from the Fred House Academy.

Dr. L. Kay Gillespie, Professor of Criminal Justice and Sociology at Weber State University and former member of the Utah State Board of Pardons and Parole, was the luncheon speaker.



Dr. Gillespie is the author of *The Unforgiven: Utah's Executed Men, Dancehall Ladies: Executed Women of the 20th Century*, and *Inside the Death Chamber: Exploring Executions* among numerous other publications. Gillespie is also well known locally for his humor and entertained as well as informed the lunch-time crowd.

The workshop closed with a combined and very timely session on the growing problem of prison and street gangs in Utah. Current and educationally useful information was presented by Lieutenant Gene Brown. Participants recognized the need for frequent reminders and distribution of accurate information about the ever-changing, ever-present world of street criminals and prison gangs.

Many participants came away from the workshop looking forward to follow-up corrections education sessions at the MPAEA conference in Salt Lake City next spring. Conference planners are working on a special regional corrections strand for the 2008 event and wish to invite corrections educators from around the eight-state area to attend.

Endless Possibilities – MPAEA Conference 2007 - Did you know . . .

Thursday night's reception will be held at the Clark Planetarium? Nibble on Appetizers while gazing at the stars . . . Check it out at <http://www.clarkplanetarium.org/>



News from New Mexico

Submitted by Dianne Marquez

Twenty-six ABE programs and six literacy programs were represented at the first Leadership Excellence Academy Training in New Mexico. The session covered self-assessment of program managers, teachers, staff and students. The next sessions will be held in late November and April.

The Distance Education/Learning Technology Task Force awarded two pilot projects to University of New Mexico – Valencia and Northern New Mexico College. The projects run from October 2007 to June 2008 and are

funded at \$15,000 each. Both programs have teacher and administrator training scheduled for the end of the month and actual instruction taking place between January and May 2008. They will report to the field on their findings next June. The UNM-Valencia study focuses on GED and PRE-GED instruction. Research questions will examine what is necessary to reach rural populations, effective orientation and retention strategies. The Northern NM College focus will be English language learners. The research questions for this study involve student interest in the instructional delivery system and the economic feasibility of offering education at a distance.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department is preparing for the 2008 legislative session. A request for new funding for ABE was submitted. A Legislative Finance Committee report was compiled by ABE staff for presentation in October. The Higher Education Department ABE staff also completed the new Condition on Higher Education document.



News from Wyoming: Students Helping Students and

Highlights from the WLLA Conference

Submitted by Patty Pedersen, Student Services Coordinator, Carbon County Higher Education Center and Kelsey Miller

The Carbon County Higher Education Center has initiated a dual approach to prompt a wide-ranging community conversation about the history and future of our rural county. First, we have lined our hallways with numerous maps of Carbon County, each of which reveals different information. The idea is that every ten steps visitors will view the same geographic space through a different lens. Oil and gas leases? Wildlife migration patterns? Underground aquifers? Land use? We have maps that detail them all . . . and more!

Second, we have organized a twenty-one part speaker series entitled *The Power of Place: Legacies of Carbon County* that will provide people with an excuse to get out of their homes

nearly every Tuesday night all winter. Topics were chosen to emphasize the complexity of our wonderful county, and as much as possible, we invited local experts to make presentations. Some deal with regional history, some with regional industries and some with interesting current events in Carbon County. The series ends with six local historians presenting a symposium on the legacies of Carbon County. All of the lectures are designed to help residents learn more about this place we all call home.

CCHEC is committed to lifelong learning, and *The Power of Place* series is intended to invite people to explore new ideas by offering lively presentations that are, quite literally, close to home. Discovering more about "our place" helps us all learn how to ask better questions about other places as well. It is our hope that the maps and presentations will inspire people to explore more deeply and will instill a strong sense of pride in this wonderful place that is Carbon County. We also hope that using geography as a vehicle we are able to establish higher education as a central and indispensable institution in a rural county that is struggling to clarify its identity and to provide a future that has room for its children.

If you would like a copy of the brochure that describes the series in detail, please call us at 307-328-9204. We'd be glad to share!

The 2007 Wyoming Lifelong Learning Association (WLLA) conference was held in Cheyenne October 8-10. There were 74 participants in attendance. Events were held at the Historic Plains Hotel, the Cheyenne Depot, and Laramie County Community College. Wyoming State Auditor, *Rita C. Meyer*, was the keynote speaker.

Rita Meyer grew up in less than financially affluent conditions in the small Nebraska ranching community of Johnston. This blessed her with a practical outlook on life. She was the Chief of staff for Governor Jim Geringer, served on the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees, and is a combat veteran. Rita encouraged the membership to be lifelong learners. She also stressed the importance of loyalty (a trait that may be disappearing) and yet not to sell our souls to the "company store." We

live in a highly mobile society, and we want to be able to explore new options and opportunities to grow via facing new challenges. She encouraged the membership to "compete" at a level that would expand our capabilities.

WLLA membership was urged to "add value" to everything that we do and always to contribute more than our share toward the success of anything in which we are involved. Ms. Meyers stated that one of her goals in life is to help others to help themselves. She concluded with the statement, "I always want to be ahead of where I am at."

The followings awards and scholarships were presented:

- The Distinguished Service Award was presented to *Michael Clark*
- The Award of Commendation was presented to *Mickey Douglas*.
- The President's Award was presented to *Kelly Willmarth*.
- The Outstanding Adult Educator Award was presented to *Dell Nelson*.
- The Outstanding Community Service Educator Award was presented to *Syd Miller*.
- The Outstanding Adult Learner Awards were presented to:
 - Region 2: *Elena Bradley, Austin Begay*
 - Region 4: *Carol Clark, Auda Deleon*
 - Region 6: *Kassandra Hearn*
 - Region 7: *Nathan Roberts Hissong*

New officers and board members were elected. The new officers are President - *Connie Colman*, Casper College; Past President - *Jeannie Fullmer*, Laramie County Community College; President-Elect - *Patty Pedersen*, Carbon County Higher Education Center; Secretary - *Kelsea Miller*, Casper College; and, Treasurer - *Ginny Ruckman*.



News from Nevada

Submitted by *Sharyn Yanoshak*

Nevada has been moving forward on various policies and transitions.

Program Information Specialist Ken Zutter (kzutter@doe.nv.gov) is heading a committee to develop Distance Education Policy for adult

education. Sharyn Yanoshak (saylv@cox.net) guided the development of Professional Development Standards, currently under review by the AEFLA-funded programs. The Standards are based on Nevada's Quality Indicators and were informed by the *National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium* (<http://www.naepdc.org/>), policy recommendations of the Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers (<http://aalpd.org/>), and various state models.

In November, Hal Beder, professor emeritus at Rutgers University, presented current research on transitioning from GED to postsecondary education and training to key adult educators. The discussion included various program models for creating transition connections to post-secondary success and how they might work in Nevada.

The Computer-Assisted Literacy in Libraries (CALL) program (administered through the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District) collaborated with the KLVX Communications Group, which operates public television channels in southern Nevada, to produce the *Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming a U.S. Citizen*. According to Literacy Trainer Jay Yeo (yeoj@LVCCCLD.ORG), "The *Guide* walks students through the entire citizenship process, from determining eligibility through filling out the N-400 form and the interview process to information on the oath of allegiance ceremony." The *Guide* is available in English and Spanish on DVD or on a set of videotapes.

News from Idaho

Submitted by Dr. Robert Croker

Idaho Lifelong Learners Association members enjoyed their annual conference in beautiful Sun Valley. Election for new officers is in progress as this is being written. Of course there were many very good presentations that both entertained and enlightened our attendees. Our key note speakers, Cindy Borden and Penny Richardson, both educators of adults, shared with us their exciting and informative one year adventure of touring Europe by bicycle.



They are two courageous adult educators. The only word that would capture our after dinner entertainment would be "hypnotizing." Of course that would be a matter of whether you were a participant or a member of the audience.

Drs. Karen Wilson Scott and Robert Croker will be presenting an idea at the MPAEA conference in Salt Lake City that is designed to assist our organization in generating income beyond conference attendance and help it become recognized as a service organization. MPAEA has many capable people in its membership. So, why not take advantage of the talent that we have and create training CD's that can be purchased by other members or those in other organizations needing training.

The idea is to develop a training library wherein MPAEA members develop some short term training and donate that talent to MPAEA in an effort to support your professional affiliation. MPAEA can then sell those CD's to members in need of such training, at a discount of course, as well as organizations and individuals outside of MPAEA. We can all share our talents and help our professional organization at the same time.

Look for the presentation as Karen and Bob share what they developed and the idea itself. Make the Salt Lake City MPAEA conference a financial turning point for our organization. We look forward to renewing the acquaintances made in the past and seeing our friends once again.

News from Colorado: Anticipating a Rendezvous!



Submitted by Scott Baker

Colorado's annual professional conference, *Rendezvous!*, will be held on March 13-14, 2008, at the Sheraton Hotel in Denver, sponsored by the Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA). The event's theme for this year is "**Sharing Success: Adult Learners in Transition.**" Conference sessions are expected to post this month, and registration

is now open. To find out more about the conference, go to www.caepa.org.

Southwest Colorado is bursting with makeovers! The **Pine River Community Learning Center** (formerly, The Adult Learning Center, Inc.), the state's only premier adult education service in direct proximity to a Native American reservation, has changed its name and expanded its programming. Durango's Adult Education Center (in alliance with the Southwest Conservation Corps.) has relocated operations to a new and improved downtown facility, partnering with other non-profits to create **The Commons**—"a continuum of adult educational services under one roof."

MPAEA Conference 2008 - Endless Possibilities

Did you know . . .

Preconference sessions (4/23) include topics on grant writing, technology-delivered instruction, and teaching study skills?



News from Montana: Helena Adult Educator Travels to Africa

Submitted by Janis Huff

This past January Dave and I had the opportunity to take a two week trip to Togo, Africa via Ghana. Our plane landed at the Accra International airport delivering us into an evening filled with heat, humidity, and a passage through customs. Our destination for that night was a hotel named "Sam's Cottage." The enclosure to the hotel was a six-foot high cement block wall with rolled barbed wire topping it. It was not unlike what you would see on prison walls here in the U. S. except that this barbed wire was meant to keep undesirables out. The inside was clean and well maintained and had an old English ambiance. Tea was served with each meal.

The next morning our group loaded into a bus and headed out for the four-hour drive to Lome, Togo, our destination. Lome, a port city and capitol of Togo, has over one million Africans

and foreigners living within its limits. The morning's drive proved to be peppered with novel experiences. However, the most humorous was the experience our group had with "public" restrooms, halfway through the drive. I can't say that any of our group, 20 in number, quite knew how to use the "facilities" for they were tile-covered troughs surrounded by a five foot high block wall and no roof. Privacy was a thing hoped for but not seen.

Because we were traveling from Ghana to Togo, we had yet another border crossing and custom's check to maneuver, but thanks to the presence of our Togo host and driver, the process went smoothly. By lunch time we had reached our destination within the city limits of Lome where a wonderfully refreshing lunch was waiting for us.

Though our primary purpose in visiting the Advanced School of Theology in Lome was to help in the construction of a three-story dormitory for future students, there was ample opportunity for exposure to a variety of different learning environments. We witnessed how young men learn the building trades, visited



elementary schools, and watched as artists created paintings, textiles, wood carvings and jewelry for the tourist trade. I was most moved by the children of Togo and those adults who are teachers and administrators of the elementary schools. It is in the children that the hope for their future lies. They work, play, and learn in conditions we would find intolerable and yet they have expectation, joy and laughter.

2008 MPAEA Conference – Endless Possibilities

Did you know . . .

You can check out the *Conference-at-a-Glance* at www.uaaccc.org?

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MPAEA *Journal of Adult Education*

The *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education* is a refereed journal intended to serve as a voice for the translation of theory to practice for the membership of the Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA). The Editors of the *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education* encourage the submission of clearly written research articles, technique manuscripts, and book reviews which have the potential of stimulating thought, discussion, and inquiry.

The criteria for evaluating each manuscript will be based upon:

- (a) potential contribution to the improvement and/or understanding of practice,
- (b) clarity of purpose,
- (c) logical relationship to conceptual base,
- (d) writing style,
- (e) general scholarship,
- (f) strength of conclusions,
- (g) implications for practice,
- (h) adherence to submission guidelines.

Those interested in submitting manuscripts to the Journal should send four copies of the article to:

Dr. Gary Conti
Oklahoma State University
206 Willard Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-9192

Article Categories for the *Journal*

MPAEA Journal of Adult Education accepts submissions in the following categories:

Research Articles. Discuss concepts, theory, and research findings of particular interest and significance to adult education professionals. Maximum length: 3500 words including abstract, figures, and references.

Technique Articles. Describe examples of innovative practice and procedures in relationship to recognized principles of adult education research and practice. Maximum length: 1000 words including abstract, figures, and references.

Book Reviews. Describe the content of a book, evaluate the book's success in accomplishing the intended purpose, and give a recommendation based on the book's relevance and benefits to adult education professionals. Maximum length: 1000 words. Do not include an abstract.

Letters to the Editors. Readers are invited to submit letters, rebuttals, and comments related to published articles or ideas reflected in the

MPAEA Journal of Adult Education. Letters should be no longer than one typewritten page.

For submission guidelines, contact the Journal editors, your states' MPAEA board members, or send inquiry to your newsletter editor.

The Change Agent: A Tool for Empowerment in Adult Education



by Cynthia Peters, Editor

Over and over again, as a teacher in a union based adult-education program, I saw students arrive in class exhausted from overwhelming responsibilities and

dehumanizing work. Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of teaching was to see the fatigue fall away in the subsequent two hours. If materials affirmed students' experience and knowledge, if the class created pathways to treat each other as if our minds and our thinking mattered, then people often left the class feeling energized and positive.

Such interactions shouldn't be a radical departure from everyday life, but unfortunately they are for many people. The adult education classroom provides an important forum for discussion, and as an ABE and ESOL teacher, I found *The Change Agent* to be a key tool in that effort.

I remember bringing *The Change Agent* "call for articles" on Building Peace to one of my classes. This prompted one of my students, Mariela Bustamante, to share childhood experiences dealing with the death squads in El Salvador. Telling her story transformed her role in the class. Previously, she had been a very quiet student, but the more she shared about the violence she experienced in El Salvador, the more people in the class turned to her for understanding about sustaining survival and hopefulness after experiencing such terror. "I used to only talk to my husband about these

things, and we cried a lot. This is the first time I have talked about this with other people."

When the issue came out with Mariela's article and her name in print, we all celebrated. We imagined other classes in other parts of the country reading it and growing in their own ways as a result.

Such was the case in Anne Erde's ESL class at UMASS/Boston. She used the "Building Peace" issue of *The Change Agent* in her pre-freshman writing class. "It was tremendously successful," she says, "because students could find ways to directly connect with the articles they read." Using the peace issue during the third year of the Iraq war and during a time of heightened urban violence in Boston, *The Change Agent* helped people connect specific issues of war and inner-city violence with universal themes of reconciliation and forgiveness.

It's not surprising that students find in *The Change Agent* an authentic voice that speaks directly to their own experiences and provides a context for learning and empowerment. Each issue of *The Change Agent* aims to be an antidote to the many forces that make people feel devalued and disconnected. Its lesson plans, graphics, policy pieces, and teacher reflections provide tools for people to see themselves as agents of change.

Cynthia Peters (cpeters@worlded.org) is the editor of *The Change Agent*. Find the latest "Call for Articles" at www.nelrc.org/changeagent. Individual and bulk orders are available.



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