

PALMETTO LITERACY COUNCIL

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY THROUGH LITERACY



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

You are on our minds. We want to make sure you are safe and healthy and we keep it that way.

Our latest updates:

1. Horry County Libraries and Chapin Memorial Library are open. You can browse the libraries for no more than 30 minutes. That means they are not a location available for tutoring. A mask must be worn when entering any library.
2. People are reaching out to us to have their children tutored and volunteers are contacting us. Neither at the rate prior to COVID-19. This is slow and we are okay with that!
3. We offer on-line tutoring. It's a little different than being right there with your tutor or student, but it appears to be working for those who are trying it. Let the office know if that is something you are willing to try. It will still be one-to-one tutoring using Google Meets/Hangouts. Contact Dodi for more information.
4. We have some tutoring happening in open public places, masks are required. We ask everyone to sanitize or wash their hands prior to the tutoring session and after the session.
5. We will celebrate our first anniversary on August 1, 2020. So exciting! We appreciate the community members who have supported us so far. We look forward to an expansive second year!

Social distancing and wearing a mask during this time of increased COVID-19 diagnosis is important to the safety of everyone. Please be safe and wear a cloth covering. After 3-4 hours, these cloth masks should be washed. Paper masks and the filters in some masks cannot be washed. They just need to be replaced. Avoid touching your mask and/or your face once you have put on the mask. The mask is "catching" the virus particles, so when you touch the mask you are very likely spreading the virus.

We know some of you or maybe many of you know someone who has experienced this virus. For some the virus is uncomfortable and for others, there is a different outcome. For those of us who have lost someone, we want you to know that our thoughts are with you and your family. We wish you peace, comfort and hope that you may be surrounded by strength and compassion during this time.

As you know, our community is important to all of us. Please be safe, wear a mask, social distance and stay healthy.

VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Many of our tutors and students have expressed a desire to resume tutoring. Please remember that tutoring **must** occur in a public location. Our tutors have been very resourceful in locating appropriate areas to tutor. These areas include local parks and the beach. Some are even using areas at the old Inlet Square Mall. Please remember that some students can be distracted easily. Look for ways to refocus your student's attention later on in this newsletter.



FUNDRAISING

As you may be aware, PLC is a nonprofit organization. We rely heavily on donations, both individual and business, and grants. Due to the recent events, our opportunities to fundraise have been severely limited. We are in the process of brainstorming to find other avenues to use in order to raise funds. A new committee has been organized for this purpose. If you are interested in joining this committee or have any ideas to share, please contact the office at: palmettoliteracycouncil@gmail.com.



MONTHLY REPORTS

Please remember to submit your monthly reports to the office. These reports provide use with the information we need to apply for grants. It is also a good way for you to let the office know if you have any questions about the materials you are using.

We have established an email address to use when submitting your report. Please use: monthlyreport@palmettoliteracy.org.



NEW SAFETY PROCEDURES



We have established a procedure that all tutors and students must follow during tutoring sessions. These forms were emailed to everyone. Please make sure that these procedures are signed and returned to the office as soon as possible. If you did not receive a copy of these procedures, please let the office know.



HELP WANTED



We are in need of a volunteer who would like to serve as a Treasurer on our Board of Directors. This person must be able to assist the Executive Director with the financial aspects of the council. Currently, our Board meets every third Thursday at 6:30 P.M. If you are interested, or know of anyone who is interested, please contact Dodi Hodges at palmettoliteracycouncil@gmail.com or 843-945-9278.



KEEPING A STUDENT FOCUSED ON THE LESSON

Here are some ideas to use to make sure that your student is focused on the lesson:

- ♦ *Keep distractions to a minimum.* Sometimes just changing the direction the student is facing is all it takes!
- ♦ *Provide breaks during the lesson.* Younger children get “antsy”. Let them get up and move around a bit every once in a while.
- ♦ *Use hand signals.* For example, point to the location on the page where the student should be working.
- ♦ *Break the lesson into smaller parts.* Make sure the student understands the first step, before moving onto the second step.
- ♦ *Provide incentives.* Sometimes a simple, “When you finish these 5 questions, you can watch what other people are doing” works wonders!
- ♦ *Use a timer.* Let the student know that when the timer goes off, he/she can do something else.

Remember, not every strategy works for every student. Clue into signals that your student gives you.





Dana Ridenour

Dana Ridenour subscribes to the age-old advice given to writers. “Write what you know.” As a retired undercover FBI agent, the Beaufort, South Carolina author is more than qualified to write fiction that showcases the dangerous adventures of an undercover FBI agent. That agent, her “alter-ego” is Alexis (Lexie) Montgomery, who stars in an exciting and suspenseful three-part series published by Ms. Ridenour: *Behind the Mask* (2016), *Beyond the Cabin* (2018) and *Below the Radar* (2019).

I recently had the opportunity to chat with Ms. Ridenour to discuss what has turned out to be quite a successful second career. *Behind the Mask* was, in fact, released on the day she retired (April 6, 2016), which also happened to be her fiftieth birthday. Although she had never thought about being a writer, Ms. Ridenour’s transition from FBI agent to author came naturally, as she had documented her undercover experiences working in domestic terrorism throughout her career in a series of journals.

As an agent, Ms. Ridenour infiltrated criminal organizations like the Animal Liberation Front, a group of extreme animal rights activists. “My mission was to target the radical extremists who were committing serious crimes such as arson,” Ms. Ridenour explained, noting that this experience helped her to understand the animal rights extremist ideology and served as the basis for the three books in the Lexie Montgomery series. During her career, she was forced to witness brutality and barbaric acts against animals.

Writing in her journals was therapeutic, said Ms. Ridenour, as it allowed her to vent and to express her feelings and emotions about her undercover experiences. She used those experiences to create Lexie Montgomery, and to reveal the psychological impact that undercover work has on an agent. Ms. Ridenour was also motivated by a desire to write a realistic FBI undercover novel. She was frustrated with how inaccurately the FBI is portrayed in novels, TV shows and movies. “I hope readers enjoy my stories, but I also hope they discover something about the FBI that they didn’t know before,” Ms. Ridenour said, adding that in order to protect trade secrets, the FBI must approve her manuscripts before they are published.

Ms. Ridenour said that she originally started writing at her mother’s suggestion but has now realized that it is the perfect career for retirement. South Carolina was also the perfect place for retirement she said. Originally from Kentucky, Ms. Ridenour and her family frequently vacationed in South Carolina, and she always wanted to return because it felt like home. She and her husband, Bill Endorf, also a retired FBI agent and her undercover partner of ten years, originally retired to Murrells Inlet in 2016. Last year they relocated to Beaufort, where the pace is a bit slower.

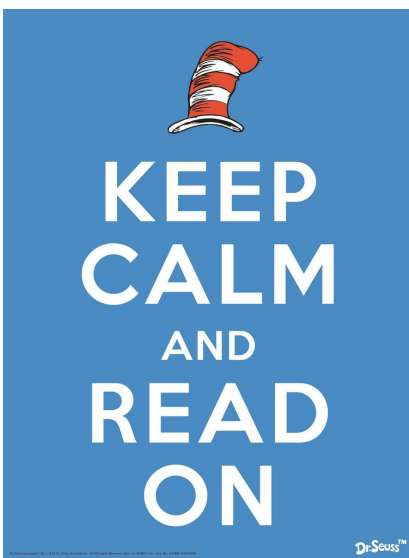
Ms. Ridenour always wanted to write a book about South Carolina, and *Beyond the Cabin* is the book most closely linked to the Palmetto State, as it takes place in the Lowcountry. Ms. Ridenour feels a literary connection to that area, as her favorite author is Pat Conroy, a Beaufort native who has been an inspiration for her. “I’m a huge Pat Conroy fan. I fell in love with the South Carolina Lowcountry from reading his lyrical prose. I’ve read all of his books many times.”

The writing life suits Ms. Ridenour well, and she says it is a welcoming change from FBI work, as she can get to know people and connect with them on a level that she was not able to do while working as an FBI agent. She has spoken for charity events, talked to book clubs, presented at libraries and has taught at workshops and conferences. “I was not a public speaker at first, but it has become something I really enjoy now. I love talking to people.” Book tours can be a little draining, however, as it keeps her away from writing, which is what she loves best.

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Reflecting on her own literacy journey, Ms. Ridenour related that she was exposed at an early age to storytelling and spent a lot of time in the library while growing up. One of her favorite books as a child was *Where the Wild Things Are*. She also loved reading Nancy Drew and Hardy Boy mysteries as well as novels written by C.S. Lewis. Ms. Ridenour enjoys the Harry Potter books and loves the fact that they got kids reading again. All kids should have access to books, she said, noting that she is very supportive of libraries. "My job is to try to promote literacy where I can." Ms. Ridenour promoted *Behind the Mask* at a First Book Horry County author luncheon. "It's an incredible organization. Any time you can get books into the hands of children it's terrific."

These days Ms. Ridenour spends time on her back porch writing her fourth novel. She is taking a break from the Lexie Montgomery series and is writing women's fiction and plans to return to Horry County to promote this book when it is published. Although she finds it difficult to concentrate in these frightening times we find ourselves in, she said that she continues to be inspired to write by reading the many emails she regularly gets from readers telling her how much they love her books. You can check out her books at Horry County Libraries and can get to know her better at her website: danaridenour.net.



NEW TUTOR ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Our next New Tutor Orientation and Training Session is scheduled for:

Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 5:30 P.M.

This session will be held at our office:

1010 5th Avenue North Ext., Suite 1011

Surfside Beach, SC 29575.

Please contact our office (843-945-9278 or info@palmettoliteracy.org) if you have any questions and/or need directions.

This session will last approximately 2 hours.

YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO WEAR A MASK.

K-W-L CHART

Use the **K-W-L Chart** to help students:

- explore their knowledge about a topic before they read
- think about what they would like to learn about a topic
- Reflect on new information learned during reading

Use with **nonfiction** informational articles and other expository texts. Have students skim the title, subheads, pictures, graphics, captions and bold words to preview the text and identify the topic. Then have students write what they think they know about the topic in the first column. In the second column, have students write two or three questions that they would like answered when they read. After reading, have students fill in the last column with the new ideas they learned.

K-W-L CHART

What I <u>K</u> now	What I <u>W</u> ant to Know	What I <u>L</u> earned



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MISSION STATEMENT

To improve the literacy of youth and adults in our community by teaching/tutoring basic literacy skills for those who struggle with reading, writing and/or math.

