



# UPDATE

Newsletter of the Minnesota Association for Continuing Adult Education

May 2008

## Omphaloskepsis, Lifelong Learning and MACAE vs. Klimoski, Linderman and Kreitlow

### From the Editor

MACAE's Board should reflect on the reality of a declining membership that has been going on for several years now. MACAE Past President Vic Klimoski performed an act of introspection several years ago in an **Update** editorial when he asked if professional adult education associations are passé (**MACAE Update**, September 2005, p. 10). Klimoski did not answer the question directly; he only raised the question.

It seems to me that MACAE is as relevant today as it ever was, but one may ask if MACAE needs to rediscover its roots or to reinvent itself. Copeland in his epic history of MACAE (1993) found that MACAE's roots are embedded in the Minnesota State Americanization Council, which originated in 1919. The purpose of that seminal organization, whose progeny gave birth to MACAE, was to serve the needs of learners. The learners at that time were immigrants with literacy needs. Over the years, the scope of adult learner broadened to include graduate students enrolled in university adult education programs of study.

Linderman in *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926) stressed the primacy of the adult learner. At the same time, Linderman "sought constantly to link adult education to social reform as an alternative to social revolution" (Brookfield in **MACAE Update**, March 2003). It is unlikely that many in MACAE see their role today as serving as an "alternative to social revolution." Rather, we see ourselves as professional educators prepared in a university discipline leading to a career.

In the 1950's, university professors of adult education came to ascendancy in America.

Kreitlow, a lifetime MACAE member now residing in Grand Marais and a founding father of adult education as a university field of study, reported that a major thrust of adult education at the university level was the development of graduate programs in adult education (**MACAE Update**, March 2003). MACAE today reflects this emphasis on the development of graduate programs in adult education, led almost single handedly by Harlan Copeland of the University of Minnesota.

The MACAE Board of Directors needs to engage in the yoga art of introspection known as omphaloskepsis in which the Board reflects on the purpose of the organization. The question to think about and discuss is, Can MACAE, or should it, serve the needs of professional adult educators and at the same time serve the needs of learners, most of whom have not engaged in formal adult education programs but are fully lifelong learners? Knoche – like Klimoski, a MACAE Past President – wrote that "aging, along with growth and increased diversity will lead to challenges and opportunities not experienced before" (**MACAE Update**, September 2005, p. 6). The tipping point, she wrote, will come in 2008 – 2011 and beyond. Now is the time for MACAE to reinvent itself through omphaloskepsis and begin to serve a larger adult learner base. ♦

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# MACAE Mission

*To promote professional growth and foster community among adult educators, focusing on four variables: context, content, connection, and collaboration.*

[www.mnmacae.org](http://www.mnmacae.org)

Find information about conferences, upcoming events, awards, archived documents, and adult education job postings (and post a job you have available!).

See **MACAE award recipients**, details & photos from the Fall 07 conference

**Photos of the 2007 fall conference** can be viewed: <http://picasaweb.google.com/littlefatmama/MACAEfallConference2007>

## MACAE Calendar 2008

Select the link on the MACAE web page to find many interesting options for your education & interest, or use this for a direct link:

<http://mnmacae.org/toolbox.html>

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# MACAE

## Board of Directors 2008

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# Editorial: MACAE's Annual Fall Conference

In the next three issues of **Update**, articles will be written about MACAE's upcoming Annual Conference because the conference is so important. One of the benefits of your MACAE membership is the opportunity to meet and network with fellow adult educators and lifelong learners in a professional ambience. This is a time when there is a confluence of theory and practice.

The planners of this year's conference have started work earlier than in most years. The planning committee is headed by Nancy Herther. The conference theme is The Mosaic of Adult Education. MACAE's members represent many facets of adult education, and this theme is designed to reflect these many constituencies. They include all the many varieties of lifelong learners found among adults in Minnesota. Every adult, we believe, is a lifelong learner.

Two keynoters have been selected for the conference – Kent Pekel of the University of Minnesota's *College Readiness Consortium* and Renee Jesness from the Minneapolis Public Schools *Online Learning Program*. Pekel will speak at the morning plenary session and Jesness at the afternoon plenary session. Other highlights of the conference include the MACAE business meeting in which new officers will be elected, a healthy noon luncheon at which you can learn about MACAE's history, and an awards ceremony that celebrates your achievements and those of your colleagues.

The planning committee plans to set the registration fee within reach of all current and potential members, very similar to last year's fees. The date is Friday, November 7. Put this date on your calendar now! ♦

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## 2008 MVAEA Annual Conference Will Be Held in Iowa in July

Several members of MACAE plan to make the annual journey to the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association (MVAEA) Annual Conference, which will be held in Council Bluffs, Iowa, July 16 – 18. MVAEA Conference attendees include Ben Bryant, Diana Cohen, Bella Hanson, Nancy Herther, and Leslie Shore. Leslie Shore is MVAEA President. The 2008 MVAEA conference theme is *New Roads on the Journey to Lifelong Learning*.

**Joe Kimbrough** will be awarded Minnesota's Outstanding Adult Educator posthumously at the conference. Joe was awarded the Outstanding Minnesota Educator certificate posthumously earlier at the 2007 MACAE Fall Conference.

Joe was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on April 21, 1930, and graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1952. Following a two-year stint in the U.S. Army, Joe received a Master's Degree in Library Science from Indiana University in 1954. He worked in the Sturgis Public Library in Michigan. He was appointed Assistant Director of the Lansing, Michigan Public Library in 1960, and Director in 1965. From that post, he was named Assistant Director for Public services at the Denver, Colorado Public Library. He came as Director of the Minneapolis Public Library in 1975, a post from which he retired in 1989. In 2007, Joe became the first MACAE Past President to pass away. ♦

## Growing on Good Land

*By Margaret Burkholder Mett*

*Editor's Note: Margaret Burkholder Mett, born in Iowa in 1920, exemplifies the millions of Minnesota adults who are lifelong learners. I plan to publish articles in future issues of Update about activities and projects performed by Minnesota lifelong learners. Margaret is not a MACAE member. In fact, until I sat down with her recently over breakfast, she had not heard about MACAE.*

*Margaret has self-published two books of her memoirs, one in 1999 and the other in 2008. In addition to being a writer and publisher, Margaret is a Master Gardener. She brought to our breakfast meeting a brief statement about her life and her books. The statement is reprinted below.*

**M**y memoir, "Growing on Good Land," tells of farming two generations ago and compares it with

today. I kept a journal in 1950-52 when Morris and I, a post World War II farm couple, bought a run-down farm with deep soil that had to be drained to farm to capacity. We moved from a Mett family farm at Spencer, Iowa, to rural Watonwan County on February 26, 1951. We had only \$5000 to make a down payment on 160 acres at \$25,000, a large financial obligation for us.

We desired to keep up with modern technology and livestock techniques. We also wanted to rear our family well and to be a part of a good Minnesota community. We had to make a good living and rejuvenate a run-down 1890 house and farm buildings. We had to drain acres of potholes to reclaim the excellent land we could hardly afford.

We joined a USDA farm management group in southwestern Minnesota, keeping their exquisite books for university analysis, from which we got regular advice and meetings on management and tax work.

The narrative focuses on a daily account of the move to the Minnesota farm and enduring the most blizzards ever in March of 1951. Without phone and snowed in most of the month, we endured difficult chores but also began renovation of the old house. Our three-year and six-month-old daughters stayed with grandparents a month instead of the planned three or four days. Thus began a hectic two years, when our son was born and we were almost overwhelmed with work.

In September 1954 I resumed teaching English in Comfrey High School to help our finances. My career grew as I continued teaching for ten years in high school plus another five at Mankato State.

As I wrote the narrative, informative and reflective chapters evolved about the Red Rock area and Jeffers Petroglyph State Park, planned houses, the town of Comfrey, our church life, teaching, marriage, child rearing, working women, and our particular love of gardens and orchards. We were good stewards of good land.

Lastly, and maybe most importantly, I have considered the rapid change we saw in the agriculture industry as we retired in 1981 and the exponential changes thereafter. Today, rural communities have change into corporate farming with less neighborliness and disappearing small towns.

I still own that land and rent it to a former Comfrey High School student and neighbor. I am greatly concerned for his generation and ones to come. I have seen great changes in rural neighborhoods, small towns, economy and education. National corporate farming using migrant

workers has become prevalent. I deem these agricultural trends important in preserving the earth as a whole. ♦

## Meet the MACAE Board: Leslie Shore

*Editor's Note: I am grateful to Nancy Herther for conducting the following interview with Leslie Shore. This is the first of several articles about MACAE Board members that will appear in future issues of Update.*

Leslie was born in the Boston area and spent the first 25 years of her life in Massachusetts. She then decided to “take a big jump” and enter the Air Force for four years. “I loved the experience.” She then moved to the west Coast and continued a retail career.

### From Retail to Adult Education

“While at Party America as a District Manager, I was pulled out of the field to develop and execute the transition of the stores from the old NCR registers to computerized registers with the all the trimmings including inventory and hours tracking. A project that should have taken at least 18 months to roll out to 48 stores took 12 months. I realized then that at some point I wanted to have training and teaching be the focus of my work life.”

### A Passion for Listening

“One of the things I accomplished once coming to Minnesota was earning my MA at St. Mary's in Human Development. My concentration was in OD and Communication, specifically resulting in my thesis, The Recognition and Treatment of Barriers to Effective Listening. By the way, once you get me going on the subject, you will see the passion that will get both the workbook and the instrument I created published so that everyone can benefit from the work.”

“The last 4 years I have been a registered grant writer for nonprofits and have been instructing at Concordia, Metro State and Rasmussen. I have also given workshops for school districts, Community and business colleges, corporations and local and state government.”

The skill of listening is the cornerstone of success in our collaborative learning and teaching environment,

whether in a traditional classroom or virtually. In order to incorporate critical thinking into our teaching on a daily basis, the Socratic questioning is critical to its success. There is no more important skill than listening when using this method. If you aren't listening to the answers in a way that gives you the next questions that makes sense, the student will know!

### Leads to a Passion for Adult Education

“One of the most important skills as an adult educator is to make the content relevant, and find unique and engaging ways to have the students apply the content so that they realize its use in their professional life. My teaching style is to use not only my background and

experience to illuminate concepts, but make sure that the students do the same. With that combined experience, the other part of my teaching style, that of not being a talking head, allows for small group work and a lot of team building.”

### Finding MACAE

Dr. Fred Bartling asked that I come to a MACAE meeting to see what other adult educators were wrestling with. I was immediately hooked, as the members were so intent on helping each other improve their skills, and get fresh perspectives.

MACAE members have a unique desire to help one another be the best educator they can be. In a world where technology moves at the speed of light and where the needs of our learners change as the economy changes, we cannot afford to stop our own development as educators. MACAE fills an enormous purpose in continuing that development. ♦

