



## License to Learn

by Brian Hallgren

**Editor's Note: This is the second article this year written by a lifelong learner not affiliated with MACAE. Update in its topics typically targets professional adult educators. The article that follows is about a lifelong learner and how he uses learning in adulthood to achieve his life ambitions. The article is about a young man trying to become an airplane training instructor.**

I grew up in family that most people would consider to be infatuated with aviation. Both my father and mother had obtained their private pilot licenses in the early 1960's, and in turn, had purchased a Cessna by 1965. Following suit, two of my siblings were also lured into the aviation arena, one of which is a professional corporate pilot today. But some of my parent's interests, such as earning a private pilot license, didn't manifest with me until I was much older. I had always found aviation interesting, but unfortunately, was also fearful of flying. Concerns such as engine failure and large metal objects lifting off into the sky just didn't seem right. That would all change in the fall of 2002, when I faced my fears and started training for my private pilot's license.

There was just so much to learn. I quickly came to the realization that I had to become proficient in many interrelated topics if I was going to become a pilot. There was aerodynamics in which I had to relearn principles from high school like Newton's Laws of Motion, but there were also topics such as meteorology in which I would have to have a solid understanding of weather patterns and how they can affect flight. And that was just for starters. I had to have a complete understanding of what all those little instruments and dials meant in the cockpit, all while navigating in a three dimensional world which was all foreign to me at the time. Needless to say, my first few instructional flights left me nauseated from information overload, but I continued on, not to be defeated by my fear of flight.

It was some time in the middle of October, maybe just as the leaves were falling, that my instructor set me free and allowed me to solo for the first time. I remember lifting off the ground and climbing much faster without his weight in the right seat. The extreme feelings of freedom encompassed the entire solo flight of three takeoffs, and three landings. I was well on my way to obtaining my private pilot

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# Editorial

Next month is an important month in the lives of MACAE members for at least two reasons: 1) MACAE members have an opportunity to influence the outcome of the Presidential and other elections on November 4 and 2) MACAE is having its Annual Fall Conference on November 7. Both of these dates are very important and should be observed by all MACAE members.

In his 1926 book, *The Meaning of Adult Education*, Lindeman stressed that adult education must address the social purposes of education. The purpose of adult education is to “put meaning into the whole of life.” Certainly the national and state elections and the MACAE Annual Conference, both coming within days of each other, serve the purpose of adult education as articulated by Lindeman. Lindeman emphasized adult education’s approach to learning as situational rather than subject matter oriented. Adults, he said, find themselves everyday in situations regarding work, recreation, family-life, community-life and so forth that need addressing.

Lindeman stated that adults want, among other things, “intelligence, power, self-expression, freedom, creativity, appreciation, enjoyment, fellowship.” We are “searchers after the good life” he stated. We want “our experiences to count for something; we want our experiences to be vivid and meaningful; we want our talents to be utilized; we want to know beauty and joy; and we want all of these realizations of our total personalities to be shared in communities of fellowship.” Above all, we want to “improve ourselves,” and we want to “change the social order so that our vital personalities can create a new environment in which our aspirations can be properly expressed.”

All of the above adult aspirations can be achieved during the upcoming month. The final word to you is vote on November 4 and come to the MACAE Annual Conference on November 7!



## MACAE Mission

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

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[www.mnmacae.org](http://www.mnmacae.org)  
Conference Information  
Upcoming Events, Awards,  
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Photos of the 2007 fall conference can be viewed at:  
<http://picasaweb.google.com/littlefatmama/MACAE FallConference2007>

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certificate having achieved the “solo” milestone.

My training continued through the spring of 2003, completing the necessary portions of flight training. There were night flights, additional solo flights, and cross country travel that I – and all private pilots – must complete in order to obtain the private pilot certificate. The training requirements were slowly met, and on July 7th of 2003, I was slated to take my examination with the Federal Aviation Administration examiner. Extreme nervousness would be an understatement.

The examiner and I took off on a calm evening and completed the same maneuvers that I had worked on during the past ten months. We did steep turns, stalls, and emergency procedures...just like my instructor had taught me over the course of my training. After an hour and 15 minutes, we landed and taxied off the runway. I was unsure if I had passed the examination. The examiner looked over to me, stuck out his right hand for a shake, and said, “Congratu-

lations, you just received your license to learn.” I knew exactly what he meant. Although I passed the examination, this was just the beginning of my aviation education. When flying, you are always learning.

Over the course of the next five years, I went on to obtain different ratings and certificates. I received my instrument rating, which essentially allows a pilot to fly in clouds, and also worked at my commercial certificate which was obtained in 2006. But the true and most difficult test that was taken was for my instructor certificate. Here, I had to learn additional aerodynamic principles in greater complexity, and have a much more thorough understanding of weather patterns and other topics related to flight.

Through an oral examination of over five hours in length, and a practical flight examination that went over two hours, I obtained my flight instructor certificate in June of 2008. And although I am always learning new information in the field of aviation, I now have the privilege of helping people earn their “license to learn” and teach people how to fly in Lakeville, Minnesota. □



# Candidate Information Regarding Support for Adult Education

## Note from the Editor:

As Minnesota approaches the November elections for both local, state, and national elections, I have decided to change the format for the October Update. Most of the newsletter is devoted to an effort by Nancy Herther, MACAE's President Elect, to get feedback from candidates regarding the level of their support for adult education.

The purpose of the October Update is to urge all MACAE members to vote on November 4 for the candidates of your choice.

In the following article, Nancy tells MACAE members about an effort that she undertook and reports on the results. One candidate responded. The response of this one candidate makes up the second part of this article.

As we go into the final weeks of the presidential campaigns for 2008, the economy, healthcare and foreign affairs seem to have firmly taken center stage. In an effort to focus candidate's energies – if but for a few moments – on education (and even more specifically, adult education) MACAE sent out a set of four questions to all major party candidates (as defined by the League of Women Voters in Minnesota). The questions are appended below.

We asked each candidate to respond to the questions by October 1st so that we could put this information up on our web page for members – as well as others – to use as they consider candidates from Minnesota for national office. Al-

though we received many email replies that the campaigns were working on these, as of today, October 6th we have received only one response, from Congressman Oberstar (see below).

We have decided to run the answers from this lone candidate in the hope that this information will, at the least, be useful to you as you think about your choices and priorities for this election. Time magazine for this week is running a story on how "Ed in '08," funded by both the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation has basically ended efforts to put education as a single-issue squarely into the public eye this year before voters. The efforts (and \$60 million) weren't able to make the case in this turbulent year.

However, this is an issue that MACAE – and all organizations concerned with education and lifelong learning – will have to revisit in future years' campaigns.

## Questions sent out to all Minnesota Candidates for National Office and Response From the Office of Jim Oberstar

1. Can you share some personal experiences or qualifications that you have in the area of adult education and how this has shaped your political commitment to lifelong learning?

Before I began my career in public service, I worked in Haiti as a language instructor for the U.S. Navy where I taught French and Creole to Navy personnel. From that early experience, I learned the importance of lifelong learning as essential to improving one's skill set. Throughout

my service in Congress, I have strongly supported adult education programs because I have seen dislocated workers gain additional education which has enabled them to return to the job force.



2. Most funding for all types of public education at all levels comes from the state and local governments, while the overarching guidance and legislative action come from Washington. In the case of No Child Left Behind we have a mandate that has consistently been underfunded, undercutting any chance for true success. What are the key changes you would make to insure cooperation between federal, state and local powers in the future?

I supported the original No Child left Behind (NCLB) Act because I believed that President Bush was committed to providing the federal resources to ensure that this new education law would succeed. I have been greatly disappointed that the Bush administration has significantly underfunded NCLB by more than \$60 billion, and this shortfall has



created an enormous burden on local school districts that struggle with this unfunded mandate. I would support improvements to NCLB, but believe that the most critical issue is that NCLB is fully funded.

3. Adult educators are very concerned with all aspects of lifelong learning – from family/parenting and preschool education to job retraining, GED, programs for new Americans, continuing professional education and literacy/ABE. Today, economic pressures are cutting many of these necessary and time-tested programs. Many are having to shut down. What levels of support and types of improvements will you support for lifelong education?

Not only should we leave no child behind in education, but our nation cannot afford to leave adults behind either. The investments that we must make in lifelong learning are essential for our nation to have

a well-educated and well-trained workforce. I support greater levels of federal support for lifelong education to ensure that we meet our societal responsibilities to leave no adult behind.



4. Statistics on America's performance compared to other countries in many education categories is very poor. The Gates Foundation finds that 30% of students do not graduate from high school on time today; that 3,000 students drop out of high school every day. What do you propose to create a true knowledge economy for our country in the 21st century? How can this be adequately funded?

The vast majority of students who fail to graduate from high school will experience a reduction in their lifetime earnings and are more likely to require public assistance. It is imperative that we provide alternatives for young adults to complete their education. Parents and educators must work together to encourage their children/students to continue their education, and we must properly fund alternative education programs so that students have the opportunity to earn a GED or enter into a vocational-technical education program.



# Minnesota Demographics Web Page

Past President Lynn Riskedal found on the Internet recently resource that MACAE members seeking information about education in Minnesota may find useful. The resource provides education information about Minnesotans by Zip Code. It also provides information for each of the 50 states by zip code.

The name of the resource is ZIPskinny. ZIPskinny may be accessed at <http://zipskinny.com/>.

ZIPskinny provides information under several headings:

Social indicators include educational achievement and marital status of the population in a zip code area that you have selected

Economic indicators include household income and occupation of the population in a zip code area that you have selected.

Demographic indicators include race and age broken down by gender.

5. Statistics from the Minneapolis Foundation estimate that over the past several decades, tens of thousands of immigrants – from Latin America, Southeast Asia, Somalia and other countries – have come to Minnesota. According to U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Minnesota ranks 11th in “leading states of residence” for legal permanent residents. These new citizens need support – language and cultural instruction, job skills and other types of education – in order to become successful, productive citizens. Today social service agencies and public institutions are financially strained and often unable to do what they know is needed in this area. What plan do you offer to help create equity and opportunity for all Minnesotans? And, what would you do in Washington to insure needed funding?

We are a nation of immigrants, and it is essential that our new immigrants have every opportunity to succeed. The federal government must come to the aid of state and local units of government as well as non-profit public institutions to ensure that new immigrants and their families have the support services that they need to thrive. I would support additional funds for language, job training and lifelong education programs to make these programs work.

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# Member Profiles

**In an effort to make MACAE more a community of learners and practitioners, Update from time to time will feature association members. We will feature Board members first and later will introduce members at large. The Editor.**

**N**ancy Herther, our president elect and Fall Conference chairperson, is spearheading this effort to introduce our members. In this current issue of Update, Ruth Stevens, MACAE's treasurer, is featured. Nancy wrote that Ruth is a long-time MACAE member who is a constant, thoughtful, yet quiet, presence in our midst. And,



also, someone you will want to get to know better.

Ruth joined MACAE in 1991. She is currently serving a second concurrent year as treasurer. She

served as treasurer from 2001 to 2003 and again from 2005 to 2006. She also does the layout and design of MACAE's Update, a job that she has performed for more than ten years. Ruth feels that "MACAE is a great place to connect with other educators – but they're people who do different kinds of education. So being in MACAE stretches me, broadens my horizon."

Ruth is a teacher in the Saint Paul Schools Adult Basic Education Program, where she started her adult education career in 1993. Currently, her teaching assignment is at the Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning. She has a BA in Teaching Adults in Non-School Settings, from Northeastern Illinois University, and a Master's Degree in Adult Education from the University of Minnesota. She is licensed in Minnesota to teach adults in ESL/ABE/GED classes.

Ruth is passionate about teaching adults. It is so much fun to run into people a year, two years, sometimes many more years later, and hear what they are doing in their lives and education.

Ruth feels that somehow she carries some strange sort of empathy for people who come from other cultures – whether from countries torn by war and oppression, or our own native-born people who are struggling. It's not necessarily that she knows what they have been through. Nevertheless,

she refuses to buy into the 'let them eat' cake mentality. She knows that she is "in a good place in her career working with immigrants learning English and with native English speakers who have had a hard time in life as well as in school."

In her teaching assignments over the years, Ruth has exhibited little patience with the school district system of bureaucracy and administrative dictates that do not look at an individual and assess that life situation for that person at that time. So she pushes the boundaries, demanding that the system look at individuals. Her teaching, in other words, is learner centered. She encourages her learners to go around obstacles and find creative ways to make changes in their lives.

In addition to teaching basic skills classes at the Hubbs Center, Ruth works with young people studying to become poets and spoken word artists. Ruth wrote about this experience as follows:

Well, it's more like working with young people who are finding their voices in poetry and spoken word. The first event I went to blew me away. These kids are young but old. Their ages are 13 – 19. They write and perform pieces about love, life, death, friends and politics. They bare their pain; they expose their shortcomings; and they offer their goals and hopes and dreams for the future. They put words together in new and thoughtful, beautiful, heartbreaking ways. When I leave one of these events, I'm exhausted from all the emotions – laughter, wonder, hope, sorrow, sadness, joy. It's always a new and amazing experience.

Ruth is a lifelong learner. Currently, she is taking a class at Saint Paul College, learning software to improve document layout and design. Before that, she took a class in digital photography.

One of Ruth's lifelong learning experiences is attending MACAE conferences. She thinks she has attended as many as ten MACAE conferences. She thinks that conferencing is a great way to connect with other people who educate adults in a variety of ways. The workshops and discussions are about adult education, but they are varied, they cover a wide variety of topics and are usually energetic, enlightening and invigorating. Sometimes the conference is the only time all year to see some of her adult education colleagues.