

Goodman Gazette

Dear Friends, Family and Colleagues

All is well with us. As we like to say, we're hanging in there politically and professionally. It was a year of highlights for us but the political and economic realities of our times include so many issues that cause us to continue our skepticism and lack of comfort with the direction our country and world are taking especially in relation to the education of our young people and teachers. Ken devoted considerable time and effort to providing input to the Obama campaign on NCLB and Reading First but to no avail.

We decided in the Gazette this year to tell our stories through the photos that Ken has taken and basically make this a newsletter rather than a newspaper. So here are some of the highlights in word and pictures.

Ken had two 80th birthday celebrations. The first was at home on December 23, 2007. And then again in August when the Whole Language Umbrella had its conference in Tucson. We began 2008 with a miraculous new experience. We now have 16 month old Ezrial, our first great grand baby born in Phoenix, Arizona on January 10th, three months early, to Shoshana (Karen's daughter) and Justin Pearson. She and her parents were in a prenatal unit for two months experiencing very modern technology and superb health care. Ezrial is now an inquisitive and beautiful toddler walking and beginning to talk. She talks a lot in various voices taking part in the social experiences in her environment. We just don't understand it all yet but her mother and father do. She is curious and pays serious attention to everything happening around her. She smiles a lot and eagerly responds to her audience engaging and interacting with them. Welcome to Ezrial!! Her name?: "You told me I could event spelling," says Shoshana.



Our professional and political work

Yetta retired from U of A in 2004 and Ken in 2002 but our professional and political work continue. The Obama administration seems bent on continuing to turn education into a commodity to be transmitted. So we write letters to Obama, national and local newspapers and legislators and meet with state wide and local professional and parents groups to highlight the fate of education and try to keep the important issues on the front burners. Would you like to know what kind of education we'd like for all kids? Check out the websites of Punahou (the school Obama attended) and Sidwell Friends School (the school he chose for his kids). Wonderful respect for teachers and kids. Wonderful holistic curriculum.

We have been fortunate to continue to work with teachers and schools that do understand the importance of student's engagement in learning and know that great teaching involves kids in wondering and thinking critically. They place the curiosity and learning of children first before test scores and preparation for becoming cogs in industrial and business machines. Ken has made the development of his comprehensive theory of the reading process his major focus. He has a blog going with a number of colleagues and organized a pre-conference at IRA in Phoenix which will be published on a set of DVDs and a possible book. Peter Fries, a linguist, has been working closely with Ken on issues of wording and redundancy in the model. He's also presented with Steve Strauss a linguist and neurologist on relations of brain theory and reading. They'll present again at the European Reading Conference in Braga, Portugal this July. He and Pat Shannon presented together in Minneapolis on the anniversary of their "Report Card on Basal Readers".

We continue to work with graduate students and former doctoral students and our colleagues. Our eye-movement lab continues. Several dissertations have resulted and a network of eye-movement miscue analysis researchers has developed centered at Hofstra where Debi Goodman is department chair. Our recent project has been to develop a workshop with colleagues to explore what the reading process looks like in Asian languages: Korean, Japanese and Chinese. We are learning as much about the process and the writing systems of these languages as the students are, relating them to Ken's model of the reading process and considering implications for reading instruction in these languages.

One of our most delightful personal/ professional experiences this past year was being with our Australian friend, Mem Fox, the author/poet of children's books when she opened the galleys of her latest Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes book (many weeks on the NY Times best seller list) She read the book to us which was accompanied by Helen Oxenbury's illustrations which Mem had not seen before. Yetta sent the book, which is great for all ages but especially for children from birth to 6, to all the new babies we knew born in 2008 with the inscription: this book was born the same year you were.

We've been researching, writing and publishing books and articles. We continue our presentations at conferences that took us to Costa Rica and London as well as a number of U.S cities. We presented at the World Reading Conference in Costa Rica. We took grandson Noah who did a year there at the University before finishing this year at Berkeley. He got a chance to try out his business idea of organizing home stays for travelers. He's back there now still playing on the national rugby team and organizing high school rugby play.

With Ken's weak legs and Yetta's spinal stenosis, we've been quite a sight on our scooters at conferences in Atlanta, San Antonio, Tucson, Phoenix and Minneapolis (the latter in the maze of skyways). We went to London in March for the memorial for Harold Rosen the great English educator and our close friend. Niece Carla Rapoport had a wonderful lunch for us and we saw all our British friends.

Family gatherings continue throughout the year. We visit grandchildren Aaron, Joshua, Eli, and Shoshana and their significant others whenever we get a call to go to Phoenix. (though Ezrial is the real attraction). In addition to holiday times, we had Rachel's high school graduation in Tucson and Aaron's MBA graduation in Phoenix (he's also a lawyer). We attended grand niece Allegra Goodman's son Gabriel Karger's Bar Mitzvah in Boston and spent time with grandson Reuben and his wife Retsina and brother Calvin and his grand children and great grandchildren. We also saw Rebecca (nee Rapoport) and Dean and Allanna and a cousin of Yetta. In October we attended the Bar Mitzvah of our god son Ariel Schwarzer in Birmingham Al. Because of conferences in Tucson and the Sedar in 2009, we had family and friends visiting us in addition to those who come because Tucson is a good place to visit especially between October and May. We've become a stop on the Japanese whole language tour, entertaining two groups of Japanese educators in the past year.

Our family continues to grow as grand kids bring their special others to join in our festivities. Reuben and Retsina are resident assistants with free housing at a dorm at MIT where she is a doctoral student in bio-psychology. Reuben works for a tech company that interfaces between doctors and insurance companies. Eli is a counselor at Grand Canyon College in Phoenix. His girl friend Marcie works as a chemist. Both are pursuing graduate studies. Joshua is engaged to Kayleen. Both work as waiters while they continue studies in Phoenix, Josh in criminal justice and Kayleen in respiratory therapy. Shoshana finds time to create art work while taking care of Ezrial. Justine is working as an electrician's apprentice. Joshua, Shoshana, and Justine suffered from the weak economy and were jobless for part of the year. Rachel is a student at Pima community college and volunteers in Wendy's special ed pre-school classroom.

Wendy and Bob are both teaching in a pre-school program within the Tucson public schools that brings special needs kids together with normally developing kids. Wendy has learned a lot about autism. Debi is chair of the elementary section of the National Council of Teachers of English and on the NCTE board in addition to being department chair at Hofstra. Karen continues her research on stomach cancer above the Arctic Circle. She has a large career grant for her research from the province of Alberta.

Our Academy Village Community

Come see us in Academy Village. We are busy with activities and volunteering with issues that affect everyday living in the Village. The economy has not helped with the growth of the Village. We have lovely existing homes and town houses here to purchase and you can build your own within certain specifications.

Now we move to our Goodman Gazette photo album. We mark the pictures with names if we can. We apologize to family and friends who aren't in the album. Sometimes folks just aren't in the right place at the right photo op time. With love. Take care of yourselves.....

Yetta and Ken Goodman.



Prickly pear in our backyard



Four Generations

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