

OPINION

Our Views: Advancing literacy in BR

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When Rheta Grimsley Johnson spoke recently at a local event celebrating reading, the audience was asked to consider all of those for whom the written word is not a joy, but a frustrating puzzle.

Johnson was in town to discuss “Poor Man’s Provence,” the memoir recently selected for Baton Rouge’s One Book/One Community program, in which residents are encouraged to read and discuss the same book.

Johnson’s appearance drew a lively crowd, but participants were reminded of the sobering number of residents who cannot read and share books because they are illiterate. One Book/One Community organizers have joined forces with the Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition to raise awareness of the problem and help advance solutions. That partnership seems fitting.

According to the most recent statistics, nearly one-fourth of the adults in East Baton Rouge Parish function at the lowest level of literacy. The number is similar throughout Louisiana. That’s an obstacle not only to the pastime of reading for pleasure, but to the job market, and the exercise of full community citizenship.

We look forward to the day when the community of Baton Rouge readers can be expanded.

Direct link to editorial on The Advocate’s website:

<http://www.2theadvocate.com/opinion/57662792.html>