



# Literacy Plus Newsletter

Issue #51

December 2007

## Christmas Open House

Tutors, students, board members, friends—you are invited to attend Literacy Plus's Christmas Open House on Wednesday, December 12, from 11:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. The party is a potluck lunch—finger foods please. We ask that you please bring something with NO NUTS or coconut. One of our students has a critical allergy to nuts. Please join us to celebrate the holiday season.



## Workready on AlphaRoute

Workready, the online course developed by Program Director Diane Litchfield, has attracted the interest of AlphaRoute, the MTCU-funded online literacy learning centre. Diane has agreed to adapt the course and run it as part of the AlphaRoute course offerings in February and March 2008.

Literacy students from all over Ontario can take part in the course. It will run for 8 weeks, and require about 2 hours of work each week. We encourage Literacy Plus students to enroll as well. Improve your computer and Internet skills while you brush up job skills! Just contact the office to find out how to enroll.

## Holiday Closing

The Literacy Plus office will be closed starting Thursday, December 20. It will reopen Monday, January 7. The Upgrading class will start again January 8. Computer classes will resume the week of January 21. Happy holidays—see you in the New Year.

## Christmas Concert

One hundred and twenty people enjoyed A Bonnechere Valley Christmas at St. James Church on November 23. The early snowfall helped set the Christmas scene. The Ottawa Valley Music Festival generously offered to put on the fundraising concert to benefit Literacy Plus.

The Festival Chorus, conducted by Mervin Fick, sang Christmas songs and encouraged audience participation in two singalongs. Tutor and storyteller Linda McLaren read an engaging Polish Christmas story and Dai Bassett, known from Heritage Radio and the Stone Fence Theatre, entertained with his humorous tales. Hot cider and cookies rounded out the evening. The event was so well received, the Festival Chorus has already offered to perform again next year.

The Ottawa Valley Music Festival also kindly held a free draw for tickets to a 2008 Valley Festival concert of the winners' choice. The lucky winners, Barbara Dubé and Susie Campbell, each won a pair of tickets.



## Merry Christmas

*The Staff of Literacy Plus  
would like to wish  
everyone a Christmas filled  
with all the things that  
make this season special.*

## Fundraising Report

### Bonnechere Authors Festival

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Authors Festival was another successful series, raising more than \$4,200 for literacy services in Renfrew County. All four evenings were well attended. Historian Charlotte Gray drew a large crowd to hear about the research for her recent book *Reluctant Genius*, a life of Alexander Graham Bell and his wife Mabel. Those who attended the Mysterious Event in Arnprior enjoyed the wonderful outdoor setting of Gillian and Roger Danby's garden on a summer evening, where authors Mary Jane Maffini and Barbara Fradkin gave a lively and amusing presentation.

**The Festival committee is already at work on the 2008 season.** Tentatively scheduled are Vincent Lam, 2006 Giller winner for *Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures*; M.G. Vassanji, two-time Giller winner and nominee for the 2007 Giller and Governor General's awards for *The Assassin's Song*; Frances Itani, highly praised author of *Deafening* and 2007's *Remembering the Bones*; and Sandra Gulland, whose new book will be published in February. The 2008 Festival will hold events in Pembroke (July 9), Arnprior (July 16) and possibly Renfrew (July 30), as well as two in Eganville (July 2 and July 23). Watch for details in the spring.

### Swing for Literacy

Literacy Plus held its 4<sup>th</sup> annual Swing for Literacy golf tournament on September 4 at the Whitetail Golf Club. One hundred and six golfers enjoyed a sunny day, great golf, and an excellent dinner, and had lots of fun in the process. The tournament raised over \$3,500 for literacy services.

The day's winning teams were:

1. Dave & Elaine Fisher, Jim & Connie Malloy
2. Bonnie & Ron Watson, Ken Williams, Lise Clermont

Event winners were:

- Closest to the line (11<sup>th</sup> hole): Delores Green, Vic DiMico
- Closest to the line (15<sup>th</sup> hole): Wendy

McDonald, George Wilcox

- Longest drive: Lyle Bergeron
- Longest putt: Loretta Enright, Barry Young
- Closest to the pin: Lee Armstrong, Winston Mick

Prize winners in the golf raffle were: Karen Pleadwell, Dave Fisher, Maggie Lavigne, Bill Jukes, Gus Cammaert, John Shaughnessy, Gail Smyth, Bonita Renaud, Phil Rocco, Cathy Jones, Jim McStravick, Rita Orvington, Ethel Ryan, Ms. or Mr. Robillard, Mike Maloney.

Many thanks to the Board members, staff and students who volunteered time to make the tournament a success. Thanks as well to the many individuals and businesses who donated prizes, and to Board member Ethel Ryan, who collected so many of them. Special thanks also to Brian Shultis for the valet cart service and all the help on the course, and to the Whitetail Golf Club for contributing to a successful day.

Next year's tournament will be held on Tuesday, September 2. Don't miss it!

### Raffle Winners

The Literacy Plus Draw was held Friday, October 5. The lucky winners were:

- Michael Runtz Photograph: Lynn Hill, Renfrew, #000028
- Jerome Coulas print: Sharon Jeffrey, Ottawa, #000591
- Maxine Golden Quilt & pillows: Marilyn Panagapko, Eganville, #000235
- Norma Moore Garden Design Consultation: Evelyn Turcotte, Cobden, #000183

Thank you to all who sold tickets and to all who bought tickets.

### Christmas Raffle

Art Hein was the lucky winner of the handmade, decorative Christmas stocking generously donated by Marilyn Panagapko. This student raffle raised \$125. The proceeds will be used to purchase computer class supplies.



## Trillium Grant



Literacy Plus is pleased to report its successful application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for funding to help with another phase of marketing. The Trillium funding will allow us to develop kit portfolios and a PowerPoint presentation to promote our programs and seek corporate donations. We will also be able to purchase a laptop computer and PowerPoint projector to aid with presentations.

We are grateful as well to The Delfi Group, who are contributing much of the cost of consultant time, and to Custom Printers of Renfrew, who are discounting their normal fee. Consultant Jim Slavin brings to the project his combined knowledge of marketing and non-profit volunteer-based organizations. Work will take place over the next three months, with piloting of the materials in the spring.

## Literacy Matters: A Call for Action

Craig Alexander, TD Bank's Deputy Chief Economist, recently released a report called *Literacy Matters: A Call for Action*. Using data from the International Adult Literacy Skills Survey (IALSS) and other sources, the 18-page report stresses the importance of higher literacy skills to both individuals and the national economy. Alexander worries that there is no real evidence of improvement in literacy skills in Canada over the past three decades. To address this challenge, he says, policy at all levels of government must be unified; the private sector must take an active role. Higher literacy can boost the financial success of individuals and the economy as a whole. It can reduce poverty, improve health, lift community engagement and lead to a higher standard of living. In fact, he concludes, it is hard to identify any other single issue that can have such a large payoff to individuals, the economy and society. To read the full report, go to: [www.td.com/community/literacy\\_matters.pdf](http://www.td.com/community/literacy_matters.pdf)

## International Literacy Day

The vital link between literacy and health was the focus of this year's International Literacy Day, September 8, 2007. It is also the theme for 2007-2008 in the UN's Literacy Decade. Through the year, UNESCO and its partners will advocate around the world for literacy and its links with general health care, nutrition, family health, and health-related community development.

In Canada, unlike many parts of the world, we are fortunate to have a health care system available to all. But even here, poor literacy skills can lead to poorer health. Many people cannot read well enough to follow directions or cautions on prescription medicines. They often have trouble asking for or understanding health care information.

The National Literacy and Health Program promotes awareness among Canadian health professionals of the link between literacy and health. The program focuses on health information in plain language and clear verbal communication between health professionals and the clients they serve. For information on NLHP, you can go to [www.nlhp.cpha.ca](http://www.nlhp.cpha.ca).

## Newsletter Changes

Starting with this issue, Literacy Plus will produce only two full-scale newsletters each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Though Sue and Peggy enjoy putting the newsletters together, there are more and more demands on staff time. We'll save a bit of postage too.



## Calendar

December 12	- Christmas Open House
December 19	- Board meeting
December 20	- office closes
January 7	- office reopens
January 8	- Upgrading class starts
January 21	- Computer classes starts
January 27	- Family Literacy Day

## Tutoring Newcomers to Canada

Early in November two experienced tutors, Ann and Joyce, met with a new tutor, Sheila, to talk about tutoring a new comer to Canada. They shared the following ideas that they have found to be helpful over the years:

- Engage in a real relationship with the student.
- Be prepared to answer a wide variety of questions about current events, special occasions, cultural meanings, customs, etc.
- Let the student guide you regarding personal interests and hobbies.
- Focus on helping students to integrate into the local community, into the world of work and into the Canadian culture. Do they understand how the various levels of government in Canada function?
- Make sure that they can engage in the activities of daily living. Help them to speak with their neighbours, talk with their children's teachers, or make an appointment with their doctor.
- Make use of everyday materials/events as learning opportunities: children's books, stories about special occasions such as Halloween and Christmas, local newspapers and flyers, community groups such as horticultural associations, etc. Can you find folklore from their culture written in English?
- Use jokes, riddles, comics, and cartoons (with and without dialogue) to stimulate humorous conversation about language and cultural meaning.
- Share information about their culture as well – make learning a two-way street. Cooking and customs of celebration are great places to start.
- While you may plan a lesson on a specific topic, remember that conversation is the core of learning a new language. Your lesson can take off in many possible directions depending on the weather, the season, current events, etc.
- You can find resources in catalogues, in newspapers and flyers, at the dollar store (telephone message pads), at your local library (especially the children's section –

speaking directly with the librarian, who can direct you to excellent "easier to read" materials), at the market, at local craft shows and so on.

- Help them with learning grammar and spelling as well. Most adults are interested in improving their language skills and making fewer errors. It's amazing how many verb tenses English has.
- Assign homework – such as speaking English to one new person a day, or keeping a list of new words or phrases about which they need clarification.
- Try playing some games. A new one, Buzzword, will help you explain some weird English idioms.

Many of these tips will be helpful to other tutors as well.

## Tutor Training



Tutor training is planned for April 2008. Gayle Corbin will give a special workshop on teaching reading. Gayle was our speaker at last June's AGM and gave an interesting and inspiring talk about working on literacy with her Grade 4 class. Details on dates and other topics will be circulated when available.

## Student Supply Fees

Please note that starting in January 2008, student supply fees will go up to \$15 per student per semester. Students enrolled in two courses (computer and upgrading) will pay \$25. In September 2008, fees will be further raised to \$20 and \$30 respectively.

Our costs for supplies, as well as for equipment and maintenance, continue to go up, while our funding has not changed. The supply fees help to cover the cost of paper, ink cartridges and photocopying.

Did you know—Literacy Plus can issue 2007 tax receipts for donations made before December 31.

## Essential Skills

Our funder, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, continues to emphasize work-related learning. Nine Essential Skills are, for all of us, the key to effectiveness in both the workplace and personal life. These skills are:

- reading text
- document use
- numeracy
- writing
- oral communication
- working with others
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use



Laubach Literacy's current E-Magazine provides a link to a federal government site offering Essential Skills Indicator Tools. "The Essential Skills Indicator is a pilot tool that will help you gain a better understanding of your Essential Skills levels. It contains a series of short quizzes that will provide an indication of your skill strengths and areas that may require improvement. This information can help guide your future training and career planning."

Currently you can access quizzes for Numeracy Levels 1-3 and Document Use Levels 1-3. Once you have completed a quiz you receive a summary of the results including an explanation of the correct answer. The quizzes are not timed and contain different numbers of questions depending on the Essential Skill and level.

Go to: [http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/news\\_new\\_profiles.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/news_new_profiles.shtml)

- Thanks to the Laubach Literacy E-Magazine

### Green Gift-Giving Tip!

Share the gift of cleaner air by giving a houseplant to someone this holiday season.

This *Employment Ontario* program is funded by the Ontario Government.

## Laubach Literacy E-Magazine

Laubach Literacy Ontario has created an exciting new resource: an interactive online magazine. This interesting online magazine is for both students and practitioners. The table of contents on page 2 identifies the target audience for each article and rates the reading level required. Each article is hyperlinked to an Internet resource where readers can access additional information about a topic.

The November edition is now available at: [www.laubach-on.ca/Trainingpost/emag.html](http://www.laubach-on.ca/Trainingpost/emag.html). You can look at the magazine online or save the PDF file to your computer. (Warning: this is slow on dial-up service.) This edition has articles and links for information about dyslexia, Christmas baking, eco-friendly gift wrap ideas, and more. The two previous issues are also available at the above site.



## FreeRice.com

Terrie and her classes recommend the website [www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com). At FreeRice you can play a vocabulary game and help provide food for the world's poor at the same time.

When you visit the site, you'll find a word and four other words that might define it. You click on the one that best fits. If you get it right, you get a harder word challenge. If you get it wrong, you get an easier word. You can play as often and as long as you want. Playing is certain to increase your vocabulary.

For each word you get right, FreeRice sponsors donate 20 grains of rice to the United Nations World Food Program. The site tells you how many grains of rice were donated the day before (383,730,260 grains on November 29<sup>th</sup>). Through the site, you can find out where the rice goes, as well as more about world hunger and how different countries are meeting their goals to give aid. Canada has some catching up to do.

## Student Writing

Several of Terrie's computer students recently visited [www.refdesk.com](http://www.refdesk.com) and wrote reviews of the site. Below are some excerpts from their reviews:

Today in computer class we went on the refdesk.com site. It was amazing. You can look up anything from pictures of the earth to flowers, or read the newspaper. I did some research on building houses and found some pretty interesting stuff. For instance, there are cabinetmakers as close to me as Cobden. I found this by going to refdesk.com. Imagine!

- Carolyn Wheeler

Described as "the single best source for facts," I have found this site to be one of the most fun and exciting sites I have been on. It makes me want to spend more time on the computer. You can get the latest news and information from around the world. It has links to encyclopedias, dictionaries, history, and any subject category you could think up. There are "ask the experts" and the "why files" to help anyone with homework and just general information. This is a fun site to go on and I recommend it to anyone, even to my 4-year-old niece up to my 90-year-old Dad. Try it and see for yourself.

- Marilyn Panagapko

The main page had a good selection of topics; today's pictures were quite interesting. The encyclopedia section, also quite interesting, told you about the world and the different happenings in each country, such as forest fires, floods, and sand storms. The language conversion was also interesting. This is an excellent site to go and browse if you have lots of time to do so. It has a lot of good information.

- Lois Kuehl

The only downfall to the site is that it is U.S. based and some of the areas will only provide information from there and not from Canada. There are some areas where Canadian content is included. Despite that it is a great site that will be used at home. I especially liked that some sections of it provide local

information including newspapers and weather. I am a news freak so this website provides lots of options for up to the minute news. My husband and I also have the habit of making bets on stupid little facts and the answers I'm sure will be on refdesk.com.

- Lorna Felske

This site will be part of my daily ritual. The weather news is one example because I work outdoors. Daily news, to keep up to date on worldly events, business, market, sports, movies and reference materials are other examples. The information that is available is very mind-boggling. The endless possibilities can be very time consuming but informative. It can be easy to be caught in this whirlwind of endless information.

- Mike Felske

## Aunt Mary Cookies

Literacy Plus tasters highly recommend these Christmas sugar cookies!

- Cream:
  - 1 cup margarine
  - 1 cup white sugar
- Beat till fluffy, then add to sugar mixture:
  - 2 eggs
  - 1 ½ tsp. vanilla
- Mix:
  - 3 cups flour
  - 1 tsp. soda
  - 2 tsp. cream of tartar



Add dry ingredients to wet mixture. Mix well but handle gently. Roll out on floured surface, cut, decorate. Bake at 350° F. Watch carefully.

- Diane Felske

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