



Literacy Plus Newsletter

Issue #57

Spring 2010

Annual General Meeting

The Literacy Plus Board and staff invite students, volunteers and members of the general public to come to the 2010 Annual General Meeting and potluck supper June 9, 2010, at St. James Church in Eganville. As all past attendees know, the food itself is worth the trip.

The evening begins informally at 5:30 p.m. with the chance to meet and talk to others who take part in and support our programs. Students will have work to display and talk about. The supper follows at 6:00 p.m., with the speaker at 6:45 and the meeting itself at 7:00. At the meeting, Board and staff will present short reports, ask approval for the budget, and elect the Board of Directors for 2010-2011.



Some of Terrie Watson's students have been working on PowerPoint presentations—a student who is a firefighter will do one on safety. Another will have her DVD about the Stained Glass workshop. Their newsletter will also be available, full of student writing, and copies of the revised **Environment Friendly Home Remedies** will be on sale at \$20 each.

Our speaker this year is Jayne Brophy from Pembroke. Jayne has been involved with a great many community organizations over the years. As manager of the Pembroke Mall for 26 years, she also knows what employers look for: she will talk about the skills job seekers need to work in retail sales.

Please join us to round out and celebrate the end of the "school year."

Board Members Needed

Literacy Plus has vacancies coming up on its volunteer Board of Directors. Being a board member is a great way to meet other interesting people and help out your community.

Board members meet monthly to oversee the operations and finances of Literacy Plus. They also serve on committees and work on fundraising events and activities. The term is two years, renewable twice. If you'd like more information, please call the office or visit our website at www.literacyplus-renfrewcounty.ca/volunt/board.htm

Program Director Retires

By now, most people associated with Literacy Plus know that Diane Litchfield is retiring from the position of Program Director at the end of June. Over the past seven years, first as Student/Tutor Coordinator and then as Program Director, Diane has brought a high level of knowledge and professionalism to her work at Literacy Plus. These in turn have made Literacy Plus a more professional organization.



We are glad that Diane is interested in doing some contract work for us in the future, teaching and supporting some short courses and workshops that we are planning for the coming year. We wish Diane well in whatever else she moves on to next—she'll leave behind big shoes to fill.

National Volunteer Week 2010

National Volunteer Week was celebrated April 18 to 24, 2010. The 2010 theme was "Volunteers: from compassion to action."

Volunteer Canada's website notes that 12.5 million people volunteer across Canada. In the last year, they gave 2.1 billion hours of their time, energy and skills to benefit community services. <http://www.volunteer.canada.ca/nvw>

Here at Literacy Plus we thank all the volunteers who help our programs run smoothly—our hardworking Board members and tutors, the office volunteers and students who do so many jobs for us, large and small, and members of the community who support us in many ways. Thank you all for the time and expertise you bring to us—we couldn't do it all without you.

Voluntary Service—the one human endeavour in this world in which Men and Women of all races, nationalities, backgrounds and languages unite as a single force in pursuit of a single goal: Helping others help themselves!

Trends and Statistics 2010/2011

The final tallies of students and hours have been done for the year. Our results exceeded our original plans, thanks to the Field Support funding that allowed us to offer extra classes and special workshops.

- Overall, Literacy Plus served 165 students for 7,762 hours. Another 441 hours went to information, referral, and student follow-up.
- 67 students spent 3,514 hours in computer classes in Eganville. An additional 14 students had 327 hours of class time in Renfrew, thanks to our partnership with Employment Networks.
- The 15 students enrolled in the upgrading class spent 1,855 hours improving their reading, writing, math and other skills.
- Six students spent 227 hours at the office working independently outside of class time.

- In the 1-to-1 tutoring program, 21 students worked with tutors for 684 hours. These numbers are down this year, as we were required by our funder to transition out students whose first language is not English.
- In the Literacy and Essential Skills stained glass workshop in Renfrew, six students enjoyed 252 hours of instruction.
- Two students volunteered their time to office placements, spending 487 hours assisting in the office and library.
- 24 students spent 90 hours in four skills workshops: WHMIS, Smart Serve, Flagging, and Arrow Teachings.
- Finally, while 43% of our exiting students were employed at exit, by their 3- or 6-month follow-ups, 65% had found work. Another 6% went on to further training or education.

Field Support Funding

Literacy Plus was pleased to learn that Field Support funding has been renewed for a second year. Again, we are required to serve an additional 17 students and to enhance learning opportunities for our students.

Plans to date include continuation of the two additional computer classes, one daytime and one evening. Building on the success of last year's LESIA stained glass workshop, we will look at adding a welding and essential skills course. We are also awaiting the curriculum for a workshop directed towards unemployed women over 40. More news to come.

Summer Hours



Regular office hours will end June 25 for the summer, and resume September 7. However, Sue will be in the office 2 days a week through the summer to keep on top of office business. **Tutors, please send in your reports at the end of each month** so the mandatory reports can be sent to our funder.

8th Bonnechere Authors Festival

All four authors for Literacy Plus's 2010 Bonnechere Authors Festival are now confirmed for the dates that follow. Please note that this year, the July 7th evening with Steven Heighton will be held in Renfrew, at St. Francis Xavier Church Hall, 331 Plaunt Street South. Two Renfrew book clubs are kindly undertaking the arrangements for this event. The other three evenings will be held at St. James Church Hall, 78 Wellington Street in Eganville.



July 7	- Steven Heighton*
July 14	- Catherine Gildiner
July 21	- Maggie Wheeler
July 28	- Dr. Ben Hoffman

Steven Heighton from Kingston is a prizewinning poet, novelist and short story writer. His acclaimed 2005 novel *Afterlands*, a Globe and Mail "Best Book," takes a fictional look at a failed 1872 Arctic expedition that left 19 people stranded on an ice floe for six winter months, and its human aftermath. His new novel, *Every Lost Country* (published May 2010) is set in contemporary Tibet. Steven was writer-in-residence at the University of Ottawa in 2009, and has taught fiction and poetry writing in many venues, including the Banff Centre. www.stevenheighton.com

In 2009, Toronto author Catherine Gildiner followed up *Too Close to the Falls*, her best-selling 1999 memoir of an eccentric childhood, with a sequel. *After the Falls* continues the story with the family's move to Buffalo, and her teenage and college years in the activist 1960s. A practicing psychologist, she is also the author of *Seduction*, a contemporary mystery that brings Freud and Darwin into the story. www.gildiner.com

Maggie Wheeler is a popular "history and mystery" writer whose page-turning Farran Mackenzie series weaves together past and present in the Lost Villages of the St. Lawrence

Seaway Valley. The fourth and final book, *On a Darkling Plain*, published in 2009, brings together threads from the earlier books—read those first, advises the author!

www.maggiewheeler.com

Pembroke-born Dr. Ben Hoffman is, among other things, a peace activist who negotiates for conflict resolution in Canada and all over the world. In February 2010, he published *Peace Guerilla*, a memoir of experiences that include working with former U.S. president Jimmy Carter to end a two-decade war between Uganda and Sudan.

www.benhoffman.ca

Single tickets are \$15, available at the door the night of the reading. Series passes for all four readings are \$50 (save \$10!), available from the Literacy Plus office till the end of June, and at the door July 7. Come at 7:30 for dessert, coffee and to browse through the author's books before the reading. We will also raffle a copy of the author's book each evening.

Swing for Literacy

Literacy Plus will not be hosting a Swing for Literacy Golf Tournament this year. Organization of the tournaments depended very much on the expertise and energy of volunteers Gilles Doth, Phil Butler and former board member and Chair, Rosemary Cammaert, all of whom were ready to move on to other projects.

Over its six years, first at the Oaks of Cobden and then at the Whitetail Golf Club, Swing for Literacy netted almost \$19,000 to assist Literacy Plus with its programs. We are very appreciative and grateful to Gilles, Phil and Rosemary for all they did to make the tournaments both successful and fun. A huge thanks to all three!



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

BBQ at the Caves

Local businessman and friend Chris Hinsperger will partner with Literacy Plus to hold a promotional and fundraising barbecue this summer at the Bonnechere Caves. Friends of Literacy Plus (students, volunteers and staff) and their families are invited to attend and tour the caves for a reduced admission fee of \$7. Hotdogs and hamburgers will be offered at \$2. A similar event held in August 2008 was lots of fun and helped promote Literacy Plus to others in the Eganville community.

Student Raffle

Once again, computer student Joyce Gutzeit is putting her organizational talents to work for the benefit of Literacy Plus. Along with other class members, she has collected 10 prizes from local businesses for their biggest raffle yet—these include a Sonicare electric toothbrush, a birdfeeder, and a Canadian flag from Cheryl Gallant.

Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The draw will be held at our annual Christmas party in December. If you know Joyce, you probably have tickets already—either to sell, or because she has sold them to you!

More Thank You's

Many thanks to the Cobden Players, who recently donated \$200 to Literacy Plus. The Cobden Players divide the profits from each season's spring production among several charities and community agencies. Literacy Plus is grateful to be included.

We are also very grateful to our long-time support, the Petawawa Rotary Club. Board member Cathy Lyons attended their May 18th meeting to bring them up to date on our activities.

Finally, thank you to local businesses The Meadows, Serendipity on the River, Friscos and the Bonnechere Caves, who sponsored our Authors Festival rack card.

Survey Responses

Fourteen people returned the survey sent out with the Winter newsletter, asking for feedback on how Literacy Plus is doing. Nine respondents were students, four were staff or volunteers, and one was a community partner. The responses are interesting and helpful; following is a sampling of comments.



Students were asked, "what things are helping you to learn and achieve your goals?" Their replies include:

- Learning about computers and spelling and working with others.
- A teacher who explains things well.
- The teachers work with each person at their own level.
- The teacher gives me extra materials to work on at home.
- Gaining self-confidence.

When it came to suggestions for making things better, many said "nothing" or "there is no way you can make it any better," but there were also a number of ideas, such as:

- more comfortable computer chairs for those with back problems;
- more disabled people friendly;
- upgrade to Office 2007;
- more tutors across the county ;
- more hours in the day since classes seem to go so fast;
- a satellite office in Pembroke;
- more government funding so Literacy Plus can modernize.

All fourteen said they would recommend Literacy Plus to others. Students mentioned the friendly, relaxed atmosphere, the option of evening classes, and the teachers' ability to work with students at their own level and pace. Tutors mentioned the satisfaction they experience, the growing confidence they've seen in their students, and the great opportunity it is for students to update their skills, free of charge.

Student Writing

Every year, Literacy Link of Eastern Ontario (LLEO) holds the Frances Lever Memorial Writing Contest for students of literacy programs in the eastern region. Several of our students, from both the Upgrading and Computer classes, entered the contest this year. They made a great showing: three won First Place in their categories, and two received Honourable Mentions.

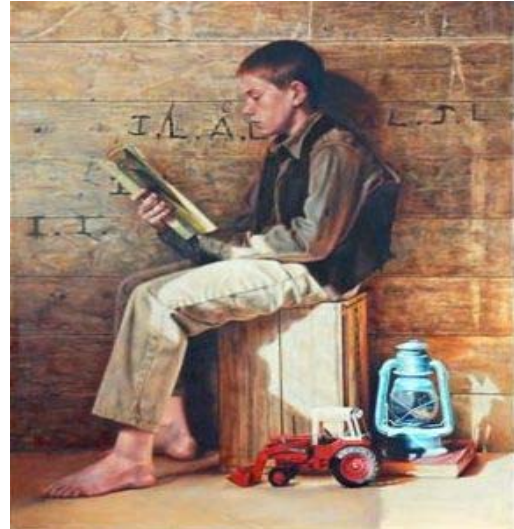
The contest required entrants to write a story based on a picture, provided by LLEO, of a painting by Canadian artist Ken Ryan. The resulting stories are so varied and interesting that we couldn't choose only one. Instead, we are printing the opening paragraph(s) of several stories. The entire stories will be on view at the Annual General Meeting and published in the student newsletter. Congratulations to the winners—and to all who wrote stories—and special thanks to teachers Gayle Timm and Terrie Watson who supported the writing.

A Father's Love

Little Tommy Harris is sitting back admiring the new shining bicycle on page 57 of the Canadian Tire catalogue. He can see himself and his best friend Henry, driving up to nearby Hillbilly Mountain and coming down as fast as speeding bullets. He can feel the wind blowing through his hair and see the cows in the nearby field give him a strange look as they fly by. Just as they are nearing the bottom of the hill, he suddenly comes out of his daydream when his dog starts barking at the postman.

He sighs and then looks back at the catalogue again. He wishes that his family could afford to buy him the new bicycle. He has been on his best behaviour for the last 6 months ever since he first laid eyes on it. He has even been doing his and his sisters' chores around the farm without being asked, but he knows that it is impossible at this time for his wish to come true....

- Colleen Yuke, 1st Place



Simple Pleasures

Bob was a bit tall for a ten year old, which made his pants look like they were too short for him. He had light brown hair and a splash of freckles across his slightly upturned nose. He had patches on the seat of his britches from doing all the rough and tumble things that young lads his age like to do....

Occasionally when Pa was late picking him up after school, Bob would sit on the old crate behind Mr. Steven's hardware store and read about the adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer. Not many boys enjoyed reading but Bob could think of no better thing to do. He had a very active imagination and when he read, the characters would come alive on the pages....

- Pauline Storie, 1st Place

Ross's Special Place

Ross has a lot going on at home. His special place is the only place he feels safe. Nobody else knows where this place is and nobody can come and bother him. His special place is in an old building. It is an old vacant factory. In the factory is some used furniture they had left behind. Ross has a chance to be a kid and can do what he wants in his special place because no grown ups are allowed. On some days, Ross would sit outside for fresh air and read books or magazines or play with his toys....

- Veronica Dupuis, 1st Place

The Boy Who Wanted to Learn

This story is about a boy who wanted to learn, back in the 19th century. His name was Randy. Randy lost his family when he was a young boy. He didn't have much, just his toy tractor, a lantern and a book. He lived on the streets of Ottawa and had no place to stay. On warm summer days he would sit on a wooden crate and look at magazines and dream about going to school to learn. He wanted to be a teacher so that he could teach other kids who had nothing. He said, "One day I will go to school and learn."

He was walking one day and came across a walk-in centre, so he decided to go in and ask for help from the lady behind the desk....

- Terry Dicks, Honourable Mention

The Daydreaming Boy

This painting took place in the 1800s. The painting shows a boy sitting on a wooden box reading a book about the life and times of the olden days and how the people lived in those times. He has his lantern, tractor and another book by the crate. He is sitting by a wall with some writing on it. It looks like he is having an interesting time with the book. He seems very comfortable in the summer breeze; there is nice warm air and you can see the shadow of the sun reflecting off the young man.

He is reading about the fishing that he might do in the summer when he goes out on the boat with his father or brother. He imagines himself on a big teak boat catching lots of fish to help his family live....

- Rickey Mckay, Honourable Mention

Boy Sitting On Crate Reading

Trying to get an education in the late 1800s and early 1900s was frowned upon by many families. They mostly lived on ranches, or small farms. The boys were expected to help run the homestead. Even when they married, the boy and his wife stayed in the family home. It was always a very large home.

Once in a while a lad would really want to learn, but he would have to do so in secret. In this picture, Tom is studying on a crate out sight of any of his family. He desperately wanted to get off the farm. He had dreams of working in an office, living in an apartment, and dressing in a suit and tie.

Two miles from the farm, a teacher at the country school was helping Tom. She would show him some school work while his family thought he was just playing, or fishing....

- Mary Veley-Wood



Our Special Place

While I was going through some old family pictures this morning, I came across a picture that I took of my brother Michael, when we used to live on our parents' chicken farm in 1947. I was the youngest girl of four brothers: Isaac, Adam, John, and Michael. Michael was the oldest and because our parents didn't have much money and needed extra help around the farm, Michael had to quit school at a very young age.... I used to love to borrow my father's camera and take pictures around the barn. I can still remember taking this picture of Michael like it was yesterday....

It was a warm spring evening when I took this picture of him reading some book. I remember after supper running to the barn, and then noticing that Michael was there sitting and reading. He had a collection of stuff by him. For some reason I felt sad when I saw him....

- Amanda Elmlinger

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