



Literacy Plus News

Issue #52

Spring 2008

Annual General Meeting

The Board and staff of Literacy Plus invite students, volunteers and members of the general public to attend the 2008 Annual General Meeting and potluck supper on Wednesday, June 11th. We look forward each year to the wonderful food and the chance to meet and talk to the many people who take part in and support our program.

Guest speakers this year are a lively trio: Chris Hinsperger of the Bonnechere Caves, Preston O'Grady, Bonnechere Museum and Stu Jack, geologist and former teacher, will talk about "acting on your dreams" and share their insights on making connections and making things happen in the community. We plan to launch our capital partnership campaign and show off the materials that were developed this winter with the Trillium grant. And computer and upgrading class students will have displays and presentations of their projects.

The serious business of the Annual General Meeting is to report to our members on the year's activities and finances, and to elect board members to replace those whose terms are ending. For more information about becoming a board member, please call the office or visit our website at www.literacyplus-renfrewcounty.ca/volunt/board.htm

Come at 5:30 p.m. to meet and greet and see the student displays. Dinner is at 6:00, welcome and guest speakers at 6:45, and the meeting is at 7:00. Tutors, bring your students or encourage them to come. We look forward to seeing you there.

Tutor Training

Tutor Training was offered Saturday, May 24, for new tutors and for experienced tutors interested in a "refresher." Diane gave tutors an orientation to Literacy Plus and led the tutors through workshops on Working with Adult Literacy Learners, Planning Your Lessons for Success, and Recording Student Progress and Achievement.

Seven tutors attended the all-day session. Most are already matched with students and appreciated the opportunity to ask questions of Diane and network with other tutors.

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.

- Elizabeth Andrew

Summer Hours

Looking ahead, we remind you that the Literacy Plus office closes for the months of July and August. Friday, June 27, will be our last day before summer; we will reopen with regular hours Tuesday, September 2. Sue and other staff will be in from time to time to deal with messages, mail and other business.

Tutors who are meeting with students through the summer, **please send in your tutor reports right after your last meeting each month.** Sue will need your hours for the statistics reports. If you have questions, you can e-mail the office. Diane will check e-mail at least once a week.

Bonnechere Authors Festival

The 6th annual Bonnechere Authors Festival is branching out in new directions. This year, we offer **five** authors in four different locations on the **five** Wednesdays in July. The committee has confirmed the following authors and locations for this year's Festival:

- July 2: Phil Jenkins, Eganville
St. James Church, 78 Wellington St.
- July 9: M.G. Vassanji, Pembroke
Marguerite Centre, 700 Mackay St.
- July 16: Frances Itani, Arnprior
Gillian Danby's garden
143 Russell St. N.
- July 23: Sandra Gulland, Eganville
St. James Church, 78 Wellington St.
- July 30: Elizabeth Hay, Renfrew
Queen Elizabeth Public School
100 Veteran's Memorial Blvd.

Phil Jenkins is an Ottawa writer interested in Canadian history. His new book is *Beneath My Feet: The Memoir of George Mercer Dawson*, the man who led the Geological Survey Unit during its exploration of the Canadian West. Other books include *An Acre of Time* and *River Song*. M.G. Vassanji is a celebrated writer and 2-time winner of the Giller Prize. His most recent book is *The Assassin's Song*.

Frances Itani is an Ottawa writer whose 2007 book, *Remembering the Bones*, received wide praise. Her 2001 book *Deafening* was nominated for many prizes.

Local author Sandra Gulland's new book, *Mistress of the Sun*, was released in February and spent several weeks on the Maclean's best-seller list. Her Josephine Trilogy has been published in 13 languages. Ottawa writer Elizabeth Hay's most recent book, *Late Nights on Air*, won the Giller Prize for 2007. Previous books include *Garbo Laughs* and *A Student of Weather*.

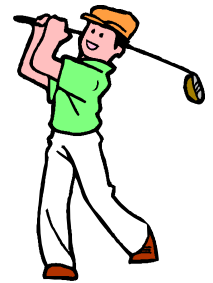
Single tickets are \$15, available at the door the night of the reading. Series passes for all five

readings are \$60, available from the Literacy Plus office till the end of June, and at the door July 2.

Come at 7:30 p.m. for dessert and coffee, and to browse the authors' books. Readings start at 8:00 p.m. Please note that the Arnprior event is outdoors: come at 7:00 for a 7:30 reading. The rain location is the Arnprior Public Library.

Swing for Literacy

Tuesday, September 2, is the date of this year's golf tournament, to be held once again at the Whitetail Golf Club, near Eganville. Whitetail helped us put on a great tournament last year—we had many positive comments from golfers and we're pleased to be returning to this course.



The \$80 fee includes golf carts, valet service from car to cart, free warm-up on the driving range, 18 holes of golf and a turkey dinner. Charitable receipts for the donation portion of the fee will be available. Dinner only is \$20. Once again, there will be an on-site raffle with great prizes. Registration is at 11:00 a.m., and golf starts at 12:00 noon.

You don't have to be a great golfer to enjoy this tournament, you can just come and have fun. We like to see a good showing of golfers from Renfrew County, so please get the information out to the golfers you know.

Please pre-register by August 19. Call Gilles Doth (613-628-1818) or Rosemary Cammaert (613-628-3072) or at rcammaert@nrtco.net.

Concert



Christmas is still far away but please take note that the Valley Festival Choir will return this year to partner with Literacy Plus on a fundraising Christmas concert, to be held Friday, November 28, at St. James Church hall in Eganville.

MTCU Field Support

Again this year, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities was able to provide some extra year-end Field Support funding to literacy agencies. This year's funding was directed to furthering the Ministry's Rapid Re-employment Initiative. MTCU is committed to training that helps unemployed or laid-off workers retrain or improve their skills so they can get back to work.

Funds were announced at the end of January and had to be spent by March 31, so it was quite a scramble. Some of the funds were used to upgrade equipment and office furniture, and to purchase work-related learning resources.

Literacy Plus was able to collaborate with Base Petawawa to provide some basic upgrading for soldiers who want to pass military aptitude tests or to write the GED (high school equivalency) exams, qualifications they need for their jobs. Tutors Michael Wendt and Mark Branecki each spent a week working with the soldiers on reading and writing skills, and on math and science.

Literacy Plus also sponsored a panel discussion for job seekers, organized by Chris Hinsperger and held at Magelly's Restaurant in Eganville. The panel of six was made up of local employers representing different sectors of the economy, who answered questions from attendees on what they look for from successful job applicants.

The panelists for each sector were Charlotte Gebhart, Serendipity on the River, for retail sales; Claudia Van Wijk, Owl Rafting and Madawaska Kanu Centre, for tourism; Marilyn Alexander, Comfort Inn, for hospitality; Shawn McHale, Ottawa Valley Glass, for manufacturing; Don Bishop, Bishop Aquatic Technologies, for technology; and George Pezoulus, Frisco's Restaurant, hospitality and food services.

The panel stressed the importance of putting your best foot forward in your resume and

cover letter, dressing appropriately for the job you seek, having good communication and good team skills, and having a friendly, helpful manner for dealing with the public.

The evening was a success for all who participated. Literacy Plus was pleased to be able to connect employers and job seekers, both students and adults, and to make closer links with the business community.

Year-end Statistics

At the end of March, we tally up our program statistics for the year just ended to see, in numbers, who we have served and what we have achieved.



- Overall, from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, Literacy Plus delivered training to 179 students for a total of 7,092 hours. Another 303 hours were spent on information, referral, and follow-up services.
- This year nearly a third of our students were men, up from a quarter last year. Our largest age groups were 25 to 44 years (50 students) and 45 to 64 years (99 students).
- These are the prime working years, and 82% of our students cited employment skills as their main goal for training at Literacy Plus. Nearly 40% (70 students) were already employed but came to improve their skills or learn new ones.
- 76 computer students spent 2,700 hours in class and another 645 hours in on-line courses and other supported learning.
- Thirteen students spent 1,420 hours improving their reading, writing, math and work skills in the upgrading class.
- Volunteers provide essential services to Literacy Plus. Thirty-one volunteer tutors delivered 930 hours of one-to-one training and another 400 hours of classes and workshops to 55 students.
- Thirteen board members spent 784 (recorded!) hours on board and committee work as well as fundraising to support the organization. **Thank you, volunteers.**

Notes from Diane's Desk

Greetings to all tutors and students! It seems as if it has been a very long time since I've written to you. And it has been. A lot has happened at Literacy Plus since Christmas.



First of all, the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) is continuing to move towards a new way of monitoring success. In the past, the key information that we needed from all tutors was the amount of time you spent with your student(s). Those days are coming to an end. The emphasis is shifting to the effectiveness of the learning process. Instead of measuring success by "time spent," the Ministry is moving towards measuring success by "learning achieved." This development is an excellent one. The downside is that the kind of paperwork that we have been doing is going to have to change.

A second development in the past few months was a very beneficial and supportive Program Monitoring Visit by our Ministry Field Consultant, Mme Nycol Vinette. Mme Vinette gave Literacy Plus several excellent Action Items designed to assist us in better meeting recent developments at the Ministry.

Many of these developments will help to focus the students' and tutors' work together on measuring learning achieved. As a result, in September, there will be a new monthly Tutor Report form.

1. In the interim, as I meet with each of you, I will be bringing more detailed learning goals – charts that you can use to "check off" what you have learned. Some of these goals will relate directly to reading, writing, and arithmetic; others will relate to learning necessary for the student's stated career goal (if the student has one). The achievement of these goals will be recorded on the new Tutor report form.
2. There is an increased emphasis on setting and achieving short-term goals. So when I visit with you, I will be asking each of you to

develop short-term learning goals – something "small" such as getting a library card and taking out a book. While this item has been on the back of the monthly report, it has not been emphasized in the past. As I visit, I'm sharing an interim form for this purpose. In the fall, such short-term goals will have greater emphasis on the new form.

3. Each tutor and student will be asked to keep samples of work, demonstrating that these goals are being achieved. Every couple of months, you will be asked to send one (or more) in to the office. I will also look forward to collecting some of your demonstrations when I visit with you.
4. Lastly, we have been asked to keep a record of the web sites and any computer-based activities that students and tutors use. As I visit, I'm sharing an interim form for this purpose. There will be a section for recording this data on the new monthly report form.

Trillium Grant



Trillium grant funding approved in November gave Literacy Plus another welcome boost in its efforts to promote our programs and cultivate supporting partnerships. We now have a professional portfolio and a PowerPoint presentation that outline what literacy means and what Literacy Plus can offer to the community. Board and staff have also received training in making presentations to other organizations and businesses.

We will officially launch our capital partnership campaign at the Annual General Meeting on June 11. We are grateful to Trillium and also to the partners who gave us in-kind support for the project: The Delfi Group and Custom Printers for contributing a portion of their fees.

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

Student Writing

People Say that I Am Because....

People say that I am cooperative because I have the ability to help people when they ask. I also assist when they don't ask...I think if you look at some people you know if they would work well around others and I know if you look at me I am that type. The type who cooperates easily and well with others.



Organized is a key factor in the working world. I think if you are organized then you will be efficient and get things done faster. I know that I am organized because if I wasn't I would be going crazy. Well I do if anything gets moved or missing so that keeps me on my toes and organized.

I am dependable because I am always on time or even sometimes early. As it is I have 2 children of my own and know what it means to have a tight schedule. I think if you are not on time then you are not the person to depend on when it comes to a crisis. I am always the dependable one and I have proven it many times.

I am motivated to learn because I am always reading true stories and always finding out the truth about something. I always want to be involved with what anyone is doing so I can learn. I am eager to learn.

Friendly is something that comes natural to me. It was something that I have always done even if I didn't know the person. Still I was friendly to them in saying hi, in passing. I learned don't be rude it never gets you anywhere.

Well if you know me for a long time you will know that I am a hard worker. I have worked 6 years in construction and can lift 75 lbs. I think that my drive to finish and the drive to perfect something gets me motivated to be a hard worker.

I guess this takes back to organization. To be organized you have to plan how you will do

something and I do that well. Give me instructions and I will plan the best way I will get it done. Instilled in to all of us is planning, the only difference is if it is used or not.

Depending on what needs fixing I can do some of it. Like if you have a broken piece of jewelry I maybe able to help but when it comes to fixing bigger things I may need help and I am not afraid to ask for it.

I am talented in many different things. I am able to create dream catchers, and I am a good singer, I like to give tarot card readings, there is so much joy when I am doing my own thing and finishing it all at once.

I am helpful, when asked I will do it if I can. I will try to help and if I can't then I help by finding someone who can.

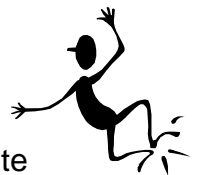
-- Paulette Winter

Workready on AlphaRoute

In February and March, Diane facilitated her Workready course through the provincial AlphaRoute online learning centre. It was a huge undertaking. Over 100 students enrolled, with a core of 40 carrying through to completion. There were many technical problems, especially when Diane (like students in many places) tried to work from home on dial-up Internet service. Giving personal responses to so many students was also a challenge. However, those students who carried through had an excellent learning experience - AlphaRoute praised the course.

And the Winner Is...

Student Colleen Yuke won a book prize in a draw held in an AlphaRoute course she took this winter. Students had to complete two quizzes to enter the draw. The prize book is *Journeys of the Spirit III: A Collection of Writings by Aboriginal Literacy Students*. Colleen also received certificates from AlphaRoute for completion of the courses Essential Employment Skills and Workready which will be presented at the AGM.



Computer Class News

Terrie's classes are busy applying the computer skills they've learned to designing PowerPoint presentations. Working on topics of personal interest, students are developing a series of slides or pages on their themes. They are learning how to use photos, graphics and clip art to enhance their written materials.

Among the themes are poetry "slams," a 40th wedding anniversary celebration, including an original poem; a 50th wedding anniversary celebration for a student's parents, with photos and writings; a life story; the 2008 menu for Crossroads Restaurant; and a 12-month Literacy Plus calendar for 2009. The calendar will have clipart as well as photos of students, staff and teachers in the office, and will have room for notes and appointments.

You can see some of this great work at the Annual General Meeting on June 11, and talk to the students about their work.

Student Raffle



Our enterprising students have organized another great raffle to support the computer classes, this time with multiple prizes. The prizes include: a photo album hand decorated in fabric, hand knit dish cloths, a Jobmate toolbox, a 25-piece screwdriver set, a set of 21 drill bits, a nail care kit, and a set of pyrex measuring cups. Tickets are 99¢, on sale at the office and from students—you might even run into Joyce and Maxine selling them at Ron Nelson's. Tickets will be available at the AGM, up until the draw.

Newsletter Production

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Online Resources



The Learning Edge

Issue #10 of The Learning Edge is now available at www.thewclc.ca/edge/. Its focus is apprenticeship. The issue looks at five steps that learners should take if they are interested in becoming an apprentice and looks at a number of questions that learners commonly ask about apprenticeships. There's a great interview with a college dean about the apprenticeship program and two adults talk about their experience as apprentices.

Back issues are available at the website. Issue #9 looks at transferable skills and the literacy and essential skills required for two entry level jobs: Cashier and Florist Assistant. Other issues look at goal setting and communication in the workplace. Educator Larry Ferlazzo calls *The Learning Edge* the number one employment resource for students!

Laubach Literacy has just released its 6th and final issue of its e-zine for teachers and students of literacy. All six issues remain available online. Topics in issue #6 include a video link to Arnie's Garden, a follow-up to deciphering dyslexia, with web links, an overview of Employment Ontario and more household tips. You can access the magazine at: <http://www.laubach-on.ca/Trainingpost/emag.html>. You can look at it online or save the PDF file to your computer. (Warning: access is slow on dial-up service.)

AlphaPlus Blogs—New Pages

Three new pages have been added to the AlphaPlus blog, with live links to up-to-date information about employment and jobs in Ontario as well as to information and activities about numeracy and writing for and in the workplace. To access these blogs, visit <http://blog.alphaplus.ca/>.

Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

– Will Rogers