

Live and Learn

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance



Photo courtesy of johnsylvester.com

Spring 2013



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Live and Learn – Spring 2013

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The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance

Published by the PEI Literacy Alliance.

Edited, written and designed by Catherine O'Bryan, Norman Finlayson and Jinny Greaves.

We would like to hear from you if you have:

- learners' stories
- creative writing by learners
- articles or news about teaching adults
- upcoming events
- new resources for adult education

Please send your material to:

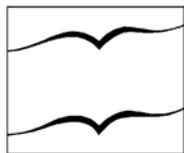
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**PEI
Literacy
Alliance**

This publication is made possible by funding from the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy.



Mark your calendar for our 2013 tournament:

**Friday June 14th, 8:00 am
shotgun start, at Belvedere
Golf Course.**

**Banquet and reception at the
Top of the Park restaurant.**

**The Golf Tournament for
Literacy, founded by Peter
Gzowski, is our annual
fund-raiser for learner
bursaries, scholarships and
other literacy initiatives.**

**Each June many of PEI's
business leaders gather for
a day of golf,
entertainment and good
food to raise money for
Island literacy.**

www.peipgigolf.ca

If You Want a Company to Grow, Train the Staff

Excerpted from an article by Gloria Welton, *The Employment Journey*

Mario Allain, owner and president of FundyPros Specialty Construction in New Brunswick, came to PEI in March. The Alliance invited him to talk about why and how he started a training school within his business.



Mario Allain

FundyPros is the largest construction firm in New Brunswick, with 200 employees. Their services include installation of drywall, EIFS (stucco), plaster, flooring, ceilings, steel studs, insulation and firestop protection systems. “I wanted to raise the standards of training for this industry and the end result has been fantastic,” says Mario. “Last year was my best year of business ever.”

By 2000, the company had grown to 120 employees. “I recognized early on that if we were to continue to grow, I had to start investing in the staff by offering training. As an employer I was doing what everyone else does - I promoted my best workers. But they would fail in their new positions even though they worked hard. The same problems kept coming up with no resolution. I found that the staff didn’t have the proper skills to advance.”

“I asked the staff what I could do to help them do better on the job. I could tell they were scared. These men had been doing their job anywhere from five to 30 years. Some feared it would be found out that they could not write well or read documents and blueprints, and that they didn’t have other foundational skills.

“I understood that I had to change the culture, and let employees know that education and training was a positive thing.”

“They needed help with reading, writing, document use, and other skills. I told them that I was not going to threaten them with tests, evaluations, or distinguish the smartest from the rest. No one would be left behind or lose their job.

Staff members were being recognized, appreciated, and supported in their learning. “When that culture change started to take place, I saw stars coming out of the woodwork.”

For more about FundyPros Specialty Construction, visit www.fundypros.com

Bursary Winners



Blair Gray, student at Furture Tech West won a **\$750 PEI Literacy Alliance Bursary**. Here he poses with his current instructor, Shirleen O'Brien (left) and his past instructor, Vaunda Richards.



Lisa Marie Gaudet, student at the Institute of Advanced Learning in Summerside won a **\$750 APM Bursary** presented by Paul Daley.

Other **PEI Literacy Alliance Bursary** winners were:

Trinity Lewis
Holland College
Alberton Campus

and

Destiny Gallant
Holland College
Alberton Campus



Suzhen Chen received a **\$750 Master Packaging Bursary** presented by Mike Auffery. Karen Ford-Doyle (left) is her teacher at Holland College at the Summerside Campus.

Scholarship Winners



Catherine O'Bryan presented the \$1500 **Gzowski Scholarship Award** to Laura Godfrey during the Holland College Graduation Ceremony in Souris on April 30th.

The \$1500 **William Hancox Scholarship Award** recipient was Michael Warren, a fourth year business student at UPEI.



Catherine O'Bryan presented the \$1500 **Harry MacLauchlan Scholarship Award** to Robin Dickieson during the Holland College Graduation Ceremony in Charlottetown on May 1st.

Bursaries and Scholarships are made possible with funds raised during our **PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy**. To learn more visit www.peipgigolf.ca.

Message in a Bottle

In April the Alliance held an Adult Learner's Week Writing Contest. We asked for essays to inspire others to go back to school. There were three winners: David Gray, Brittany Cormier and Sheri-Lynn Murphy

Dreams do come true

by David Gray

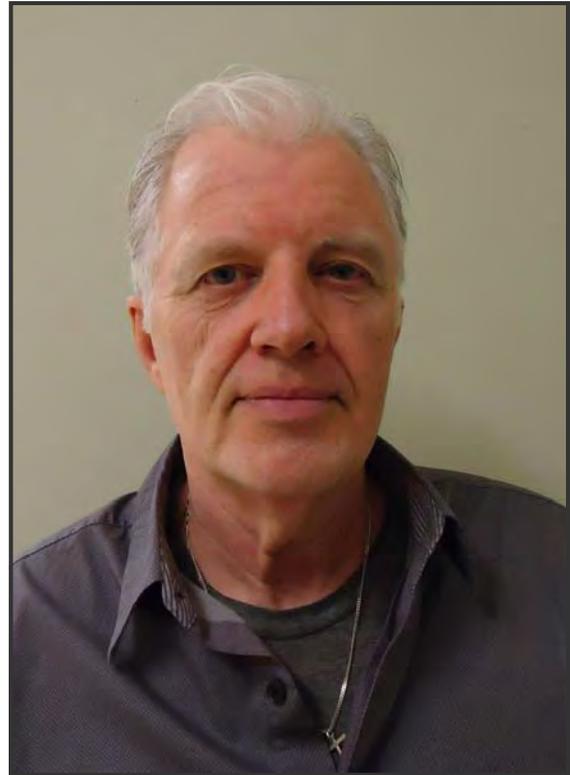
This is my third year of attendance at the Holland College adult education Centre in Montague. When I retired in 2007 I discovered after a time my life had become tedious and uninteresting. My feelings of self worth were declining and my vision of the future was bleak. Time, as they say, was standing still.

I decided to do something about a dream I've had since high school. Work at getting a grade twelve diploma. I entered the GED program in the fall of 2009 and graduated the following spring. It was a thrill to achieve that goal and left me wanting for more. A friend who works for Skills PEI suggested I look at the courses offered at Holland College and so I made an appointment with a student councillor at the Prince of Wales campus in Charlottetown.

They helped me identify where my interests lie and what course would be most suitable for me. I discovered a career path which I consider a perfect fit. Now all that remained was to meet the entrance requirements for that particular course.

April, 2013. This is the month I expect to have completed my upgrading requirements. The support and excellent instruction I receive from the teachers at the adult ed centre is second to none and has given me the confidence I need to set goals for myself that three short years ago were inconceivable to me. I have applied and been accepted into the Environmental Applied Science Technology program, with a start date of September, 2013.

Dreams can, and do come true!



David Gray went back to school after retiring.

Taking the first step

By Brittany Cormier

"I will never go back to school." is exactly what I told myself time and time again. When a classroom environment is not really your forte, it's difficult to make the decision to return to school. What makes it even more difficult is putting yourself in a position where you think you're too old to return to school, so you convince yourself to settle for less in terms of your future. Adult



Brittany Cormier discovered that it's never too late to learn

Education is one of the best choices you can make for yourself, and for your career, let me tell you why.

There is a wide age range within the student body, and this alone makes classes enjoyable. It's enlightening to see smiling faces every day from those who are also bettering themselves and their education. The students are the ones who make social interactions enjoyable because they include everyone in their conversations. Each and every student works at their own pace, so whether you're a quick learner or not does not matter. Here, you are given the time to do the best that you can do.

Although given the opportunity to work at one's own pace, we can't learn everything on our own. Adult Education teachers are very well educated in their subjects and love what they do. You will always have a teacher who cares about your well-being and your ability to succeed.

Teachers work one on one with students whenever they need the assistance, for any amount of time. It's refreshing to have an upbeat person lend you a hand, especially when you're feeling discouraged and stuck within your work.

If you're hesitant about returning to school, I hope I've helped you see that it is less frightening than it appears to be. The first step is the hardest, but the rest will fall into place.

No one but you can make your dreams come true

By Sheri-Lynn Murphy

So, you're thinking of going back to school but you have feelings of fear, doubt and hesitation that you may be too old to return to the classroom. The decision to return to school can be a scary one for potential students who are older. I hope you realize that attending an Adult Education Centre will be the first step in the right direction to making a positive change in your life. I would like to take the opportunity to share with you my story and experiences in the classroom of an Adult Education classroom.

I'm 43 years old and have been out of school for 25 years. After raising three children and working for many years in Customer Service, I decided that I needed a career change. In order to go onto post-secondary education I discovered that I needed Grade 12 academic English in order to pursue my career goal.

In January 2013, I started my journey at Holland College Montague Centre. The first few days I had feelings of self-doubt and no self-confidence. My instructor had informed me that older students most often have these feelings, and that with time they would go away. She was right! After completing some assignments and realizing that I could do the work a sense of accomplishment and pride took over and the feeling of self-doubt was pushed out the door.

The environment at the Adult Education Centre is one of encouragement and support. The instructors are kind, caring and helpful towards every student which makes the learning process so much easier. I've met a lot of wonderful classmates, and we all treat each other with respect and are supportive of one another.

Whether you're young or old I encourage you to attend Adult Education. I assure you that you'll finish the program with self-worth, self-confidence and a sense of pride. Set goals for yourself and reach for the stars. No one but yourself can make your dreams come true! Good luck with your decision and journey!



Sheri-Lynn Murphy is a mother of three who had been out of school for 25 years when she

Welcome Amanda Beazley

It's spring, the season of growth and change. The PEILA has been growing and changing too with the addition of a new staff member, me!

My name is Amanda Beazley and I am so thrilled to be here as a program coordinator. My first day on the job was April 2nd and every day since has been great. Catherine, Norman and Jinny have been a fantastic team to work with.

I decided that the first order of business would be to do some reading and research about literacy in PEI. So, I logged onto the PEILA website and had a look at the literacy facts in PEI. I've got to say that what I found was a little shocking.

The reading skills of 30% of PEI adults are so limited in their literacy skills that they can't deal with most printed material.

This could mean that a significant number of Islanders do not have the Literacy and Essential Skills necessary to get a decent job or advance their careers. The economic and labour market situation on PEI is already struggling. What do low Literacy and Essential Skill rates mean for our future here?

Then I got to thinking about safety on the job. Yikes, I thought, what happens when someone who is operating heavy machinery and using chemical pesticides can't read a warning label?

It was a serious wake-up call for me. I have taken my Literacy and Essential Skills for granted. I'm thinking it's time to take those skills and put them to work, literally.



Amanda Beazley

Live and Learn – Spring 2013

Continuous Learning is one of the 9 Essential Skills needed to succeed at work, home and in the community.

Continuous Learning means participating in an ongoing process of improving skills and knowledge.

Here are typical ways that people participate in continuous learning:

- Learn on the job
- Learn through formal training
- Learn through self-study
- Understand your own learning style
- Know where to find learning resources

Examples of Continuous Learning:

- Retail sales associates improving their skills and knowledge by attending sales training and reading product brochures
- Retirees returning to school to learn something new
- Adults participating in community school

Here is a 2003 photo of Jean LePage at age 75 studying for her UPEI courses - English and Anthropology.

She was a prime example that it is never too late to learn something new.



Jean LePage

Life long learning - at work and at home

Jinny Greaves

I've been lucky to work at a job that has given me valuable skills and experience, as well as a full understanding of the complex and important issue of literacy in PEI. I will miss working on such an important cause but am ready to embrace a new learning journey.

I will be gone from the Alliance for a year on maternity leave, which will be a huge change for me. I've worked at the Literacy Alliance for just over 6 years. I've had the privilege and joy of working with two great co-workers, Catherine and Norman, and a truly committed Board.

During this next year, I will be learning at home instead of at work. By the time this newsletter goes to print, I may very well be a new mom. I'm ready to embrace the challenges and joys of motherhood and expect I will learn so much about myself and what it means to be a parent.

I want to wish Norman a happy retirement and Amanda good luck with her new job at the Alliance.



Jinny Greaves
9 months pregnant



Norman Finlayson

See You Around, Folks

Norm Finlayson

You never know what's going to happen when you take one step onto a path. It was 14 or 15 years ago when I volunteered to help out at the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy. Then there was a short term contract, and then an opening at the Alliance when Diane Morrow moved on to the L.M. Montgomery Institute at UPEI... time flies.

It's been a great assignment working with Catherine and Jinny and all the wonderful people you meet in the literacy network.

I'm taking Ray Doiron's advice and spending the next year with no plan except to enjoy life as it comes. But I do need to stop on the way home and pick up some golf balls.

The Back Page

The Summer Tutoring Program for Kids will not go ahead this summer.

We were unable to secure our funding for this program. We hope to offer the program again in 2014.



Our Golf Tournament for Literacy will be held on **June 14 at Belvedere Golf Course** and Top of the Park Restaurant. Visit www.peipgigolf.ca for more information.

The Phyllis Pitre Bursary

This bursary is for adult learners, 30 years old or older, who are working towards completing a post-secondary certificate or diploma.

First place is \$500, 2nd place, \$300, and 3rd place, \$200.

Applicants must demonstrate Phyllis Pitre's values of leadership, public speaking, volunteering, and life-long learning. Deadline for application: **June 14, 2013**

Application form and other entry details are available at cdapei.wordpress.com or call 894-4100.



Jack McNamara is 18 months old in this photo. His reading experience began early. "I read him his first book at the hospital when he was 3 hours old!" says his mother Carolyn Macnutt.

Jack loves being read to by Mommy and Daddy (Keith McNamara) and numerous times during the day he can be found sitting in a quiet place thumbing through his books and making murmuring sounds as he "reads" to himself. Captain Oso is his buddy's name and he enjoys being read to as well.

"Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually require for learning to read."

~ Marilyn Jager Adams