

# *Live & Learn*

Winter 2005

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance

## Champion Spellers

Here is the winning team from our first Celebrity Spelling Bee held Sunday January 30 in Memorial Hall at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. A grand time was had by all and over \$1900 was raised for literacy.

From left to right MLA Wayne Collins, Minister of Transportation and Public Works Gail Shea and Premier Pat Binns. Mr. Binns is holding his first prize.  
(See [page 5](#))



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# Live & Learn

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance

*Live & Learn* is published four times a year by the PEI Literacy Alliance.

Edited and designed by Catherine O'Bryan and Norman Finlayson.

## 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:

Live & Learn  
PEI Literacy Alliance  
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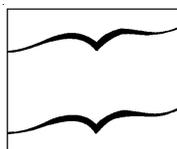
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PEI  
Literacy  
Alliance

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PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy.*

## Letter from the Chair



Greetings all! As I look out my window today, it doesn't seem like spring is near, but according to the calendar, it is only days away. Still the longer days make it great for visiting the local library and checking out new books,

taking part in Community School or attending some of the many community events across the province.

Since the last newsletter, the Alliance hosted the successful PEI Literacy Summit (November 4th and 5th). The Summit brought together 120 Islanders to focus attention on the urgency of the literacy issue. For two days, participants discussed the latest research in literacy, heard success stories, and worked to establish a plan of action for the future. The Summit Planning Committee wrote a summary of the Summit titled, *Advancing Literacy in PEI: A Literacy Action Agenda*, and it will be published shortly.

You may have noticed the media attention on literacy around the time of the Summit. We were pleased that this public attention created some momentum for change among our elected officials. We held a subsequent meeting with Premier Binns and Education Minister Dover about the issues raised at the Summit and they agreed to have one of our guest speakers address the caucus about the literacy concerns of Islanders. At that meeting, it was said that Premier Binns will be calling for a Premier's Summit on Literacy. The PEI Literacy Alliance looks forward to helping in any way as this important event unfolds.

We awarded five bursaries in December and five more in March. Our semi-annual meeting March 9<sup>th</sup> helps us connect with our member organizations. The PEI Literacy Alliance works on your behalf to advance literacy in PEI.

- Ray Doiron

## New Minister Responsible for Literacy: Lucienne Robillard

The recent mini-Cabinet shuffle could have important implications for literacy. Joseph Volpe has left Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD) and Lucienne Robillard has taken on the portfolio.

As a nine-year veteran in the federal Cabinet, Mme. Robillard has developed a reputation as a capable and effective Minister. Along with taking on HRSD, she will retain her current position as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

For more information on Lucienne Robillard, including her full biography, visit her official website at: <http://www.luciennerobillard.parl.gc.ca>

### Excerpt from Budget 2005

#### Chapter 4 - A Productive, Growing and Sustainable Economy Investing in People

##### Highlights

Building on investments made by the Government of Canada in recent budgets, Budget 2005 makes significant strategic investments in building a highly skilled and adaptable workforce.

- \$5 billion over five years to start building a framework for an Early Learning and Child Care initiative in collaboration with provinces and territories.
- An additional \$120 million over five years to improve the Special Education Program for First Nations children living on reserve.
- \$398 million over the next five years to enhance settlement and integration programs and improve client services for newcomers to Canada.
- \$125 million over the next three years for next steps for the Workplace Skills Strategy.
- \$30 million over three years to the National Literacy Secretariat.

##### Literacy

Canada has very high rates of post-secondary education attainment. There remains, however, a relatively large number of working age Canadians who lack the literacy skills required for success in the knowledge-based economy. In recognition of the importance of improving the literacy levels of Canadians, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development will be working with provinces, territories and stakeholders on the development of a comprehensive strategy in support of literacy and essential skills development. As an initial step, Budget 2005 invests \$30 million over three years to enhance the National Literacy Secretariat's (NLS) capacity to further develop partnerships with provinces, territories, business and labour to foster awareness of and involvement in literacy issues and to promote learning in the workplace.

Did the Understanding the Early Years (UEY) study find this statement true or false?

*Children of fathers who are unemployed for part of the year showed better readiness to learn than children of fathers who worked year round. See the bottom of page 8 for the answer.*

# Family Literacy Day



Isabelle Lee and Julia Bovaird enjoy the entertainment at the Family Literacy Carousel.



CBC's Matt Rainnie and Children's Librarian Barb Kissick share a laugh at the Carousel

Entertainer Mike Pendergast gets some help on vocals



Alliance Chair Ray Doiron and PEI Premier Pat Binns hold the 2005 Family Literacy Day proclamation.



Education Minister Mildred Dover reads to kids at the Carousel



## Celebrity Spelling Bee

Teams from Holland College, UPEI, CBC, Island Radio and Arts & Entertainment joined the winning team of PCs for our January 30th Celebrity spelling bee.

Retired Judge Norman Carruthers, Chief Medical officer Lamont Sweet and Provincial Librarian Allan Groen were our esteemed judges. Jim Ferguson was the MC and Cynthia Dunsford was the pronouncer.



Sylvia Poirer, Audrey Penner and Jake Baird of Holland College practice their spelling skills.



## Scrabble, Anyone?

We are not holding a Literacy Scrabble Tournament this year, but due to popular demand, Linda Pierce has agreed to organize one. Here are the details:

**Date:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005      **Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.      **Cost:** \$5 per person  
**Place:** Sherwood Recreation Centre, Maple Avenue  
**To register:** Call 628-1755      Bring your own lunch or a pot luck dish to share.

## UPSE Hands Out Over \$17,000

This year the PEI Literacy Alliance received \$500 to put towards our bursary and scholarship program.

The Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees distributed over \$17,000 to a variety of local community and non-profit groups in February as part of its “UPSE Has a Heart” campaign.

Ads are placed in local media each year, inviting interested groups to make a presentation to the UPSE Public Relations Committee. During these presentations, the groups outline how much money they need and what it will be used for, bearing in mind that the union’s funds are not designed to subsidize a group’s administrative expenses.



From L to R: Bob Taylor, chairperson of the UPSE Public Relations Committee, Norman Finlayson and UPSE President Sandy MacKay

“Of course, we can’t meet every request,” explained Public Relations Committee chairperson Bob Taylor. “This year, we received inquiries from almost 50 groups and, in the end, agreed to provide funds to 38 of them.”

## What do literacy students think being literate is?

Literacy is usually defined by academics, practitioners, and policy-makers. This research in practice project provided an opportunity for students' to voice their views about the meaning of literacy. In this study, Andrea Pheasey explored the following question: "What do literacy students think being literate is?"

Andrea used a combination of individual and group interviews to gather the data. Rather than relying on a pre-established set of questions, Andrea used a dialogic interview technique with ten participants. The interviews resembled a conversation that allowed the ten participants to explore and talk about their literacy experiences. After the interviews were conducted, Andrea analysed the transcripts to determine themes. The following section briefly describes two of the themes and the implications for practice.

### **Literacy is Language**

The participants defined literacy as language –writing, speaking, reading, and listening. This is an interesting finding as the theory and practice of literacy emphasizes visual aspects of literacy such as reading and writing while the oral aspects of literacy such as speaking and listening are often neglected. This finding suggests that literacy programs need to place more emphasis on providing opportunities for students to develop their speaking and listening skills. Literacy programs can provide a safe "rehearsal ground in which students could learn the dominant language that often excludes them from participating in the public events and the wider community" (Campbell, 1994, p. 159).

### **Literacy is Trying**

The participants also described how being literate meant taking a risk, taking a chance, taking responsibility, and taking control. Many of the students equated the concept of "trying" with having confidence. This finding reinforces the notion that confidence and self-esteem are important outcomes of literacy programs. The challenge lies in finding innovative ways to measure these outcomes, so that they are included in policy-makers accountability frameworks.

For the past decade, Andrea Pheasey has been working at The Learning Centre in Edmonton. She is a member of the Alberta Research in Adult Literacy (RiPAL) network. The full-text document for this research can be found in the Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English (<http://www.nald.ca/crd/>) and in RiPAL (<http://www.nald.ca/ripal/index.htm>).

Campbell, P. (1994). *Participatory literacy practices: Having a voice, having a vote*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto:

Pheasey, A. (2002). *What do literacy students think being literate is?* (Research in Practice in Adult Literacy Report). Edmonton, AB: Learning at the Centre Press.

- Pat Campbell

## Learner's Story

*Marica Babic is a recent winner of the PEI Literacy Alliance \$500 bursary. This is the essay she submitted with her application.*

I was born in Croatia. It is a little country in middle Europe. My childhood was very nice. I loved my family, friends and I enjoyed going to school. But my parents did not have money for my education, so I had to give up my dream to become a teacher.

I love my country with all my heart. But it does not give any chance to young people. They usually leave their homes and start a new life away from their loved ones.

I have been in Canada for eleven months now. I go to school every day and I am very happy. Last spring I attended ESL course in Holland College. Now I take the GED program. I like it very much. There is a little of every subject and a great deal of English.

My dream has always been going to university. If I go to UPEI, nobody will be happier than me. I want to study Arts because I like reading, writing. I always find a little time to read a book -- before going to school or work or at lunchtime. It helps me to improve my English.



I like very much the way Canadians think and live. They seem so relaxed. They say that anything is possible in Canada, that all of us deserve a chance to succeed.

If I get a chance to reach my goal I will work very hard, I will do my best because of me, my future but also because of nice people who help me when I am sad or homesick. I am grateful for everything I got in Canada. This is my home now. I love it because I am feeling very welcome.

*Marica Babic*

*Marica attends Adult and Community Education at Holland College. She recently wrote and passed her GED exam. Now she is working on her academic high school credits.*



### The Co-operators Learner Achievement Award

This \$200 award is presented to an adult learner at the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy on June 8th.

For information and an application form call Catherine or Norm at 368-3620.

Deadline is May 2, 2005.

# Bouquets and Announcements

**Thank you Department of Education!**  
Thanks go to the employees for their kind donation to the Alliance.

**Congratulations!**  
Tim Hortons, Holland College's Adult and Community Education and the Department of Education have an innovative initiative to let people know about adult education opportunities.



**Congratulations!**  
Nora McCarthy and Adam Joyce of our Summer Tutoring Program for Kids were engaged in November 2004. Good luck in the future.

**Announcement**  
The Department of Education has formed a Task Force to look into student performance. The 13 member committee will report to Minister Dover in September 2005 with their findings.

**New address**  
The PEI Literacy Alliance launched its new website at the recent semi-annual meeting March 9.

**Our new website address:**  
<http://www.pei.literacy.ca>

Thank you to Tracy Hine and the NALD web development team.

**Congratulations!**  
Eric Donovan President of the Learning Disabilities Association of PEI was named the Literacy Alliance's Volunteer of the Year at our recent semi-annual meeting.



Above Chair Ray Doiron presents Eric with a plaque and a gift certificate to the Reading Well.

### New course and new date



The 2005 Golf Tournament for Literacy will be at Andersons Creek in Stanley Bridge on Wednesday June 8th. For more information call Catherine or Norm at 368-3620.

Answer to UEY question on page 3:  
True