

# Literacy Nanaimo Newsletter

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Newsletter Editor: Christine Norris

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## Staff

**Carolyn McWhinnie**, Executive Director

**Wendy Chapplow**, Administrative Assistant

**Brian O’Rooney**, Computer Technician

**Jane Rose, Pat Donaldson, Bronwen Brice**: Bookstore Supervisors

## International Literacy Day



Join us in celebrating literacy  
Saturday, September 9th  
11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

We will have entertainment, serve refreshments, and give tours and demonstrations. You could win a prize or get a huge discount off your book purchases.

Come out and meet the staff, board of directors, and the many volunteers who work at Literacy Nanaimo.

Thank you



for sponsoring our Open House.

At Literacy Nanaimo, we protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative and privacy policy requirements. Information you provide is held in confidence. Information is not sold, rented, or traded to other organizations. Your personal information will be used only to keep you informed of our activities, services, and opportunities to volunteer or to contribute. If at any time you wish to be removed from our mailing list, or if you have any questions, simply contact us by phone at 250 754-8988 or via email at [info@LiteracyNanaimo.org](mailto:info@LiteracyNanaimo.org)

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## Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held Monday, June 19, 2006. The directors returning to our board are: **Wendy Smitka, Valerie Fulford, Christine McAuley, Brian Anderson, Anthony Bellavia, Julie Stewart-Boyle** and **Jane Muise**. We welcome our new director, **Tracy Williams**.

Our accountant, **John Hough**, reported we had a slight excess of revenue over expenditures (always a good thing) and that we are in a good financial position.

We had several guest speakers: **June Hughes**, Regional Literacy Coordinator; **Marilyn Guttman**, Volunteer Tutor Coordinator; **Joyce Hedges**, Volunteer Tutor; **Lynda Thomas**, learner; **Tam Green**, Volunteer Tutor; and **Daniel Bourbonnais**, learner.

The meeting was enjoyed by all who attended, with kudos to the catering department of the *Coast Bastion* for the wonderful refreshments.

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## Introducing Wendy

**Wendy Chapplow** is our new Administrative Assistant. She comes to us from **Salt Spring Island** where she worked at the *Chamber of Commerce* and *Sabine's Fine Used Books Ltd.*

Wendy is getting used to all the new faces and is looking forward to a busy fall. Be sure to drop in and say hello.



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## Back to School

It is time to start thinking of volunteering to be a **BEARS** or **BEAMS (Be Enthusiastic About Reading/ Math Success)** as school starts up again. Many children in early grades need some additional one-to-one. You can volunteer for as little as one hour one day a week. Call us for more information.

We have computers ready to go to deserving families or individuals. We will accept requests from elementary schools or community agencies. Remember, our mandate is "to promote literacy". Call us for more information.

## Literacy and Poverty

- Among working aged Canadians, 3 million (14.6%) struggle with very serious literacy challenges. They have difficulty with even the most basic written materials. Another 5.8 million (27%) can work with print information but not well.
- More than half of Canadians (55%) do not have the minimum numeracy skills necessary to meet the information demands of today's world.
- The literacy skills of parents directly affect their family's income, health, and overall quality of life.
- Canadians with lower levels of literacy are more likely to be unemployed or earn less.
- Canadians aged 16 - 65 who report poor physical health have lower literacy skills than those who report better health.
- Higher literacy skills are associated with higher levels of involvement in various community groups and volunteer activities.
- Use of computers is lowest among those with low literacy—meaning that in addition to a digital divide, non-users may also face a literacy challenge.
- A *CD Howe* report released in October 2005 shows that a 1% increase in literacy skills would boost productivity by 2.5% and lead to a 1.5% permanent increase in GDP—that's \$18 billion a year.

*International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey*  
November 30, 2005

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## Tarzan and Cheetah

We are sorry to inform you that **Tarzan** (the cat) died suddenly on Friday, August 18th from an undetected congenital heart condition. One of the staff has taken his sister, **Cheetah**, home. We would like to thank *Oliver's Pet Supplies* for helping us with supplies while they were in residence.

Malaspina University-College / Literacy Nanaimo

# Literacy Tutoring Program

Marilyn Guttman, Tutor Coordinator



Office hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays at Literacy Nanaimo  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursdays at Malaspina U-C, Bldg. 205, Rm. 234

Phone: 754-8988 or 753-3245 local 2822

Email: [guttmanm@mala.bc.ca](mailto:guttmanm@mala.bc.ca)

## Greetings from Marilyn

Welcome back! We wish everyone the best for this year. I look forward to working again with our dedicated learners and tutors this fall. I hope to be in contact with all of you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me.

The publication of this newsletter coincides with the celebration of **International Literacy Day**, a day that highlights the importance of literacy to individuals and communities. When tutors support learners in their efforts to enhance their literacy skills, they help people improve their lives—such as assisting their children with homework, competing for a job, understanding the directions on a bottle of medication, and accessing upgrading/vocational courses.

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## Congratulations, Don!

We are proud of the achievements of all the learners in our tutoring program. Sometimes a learner receives very special recognition, and we proudly honour it.

**Don Sim** recently received the **John Rostron Award**, an award which recognizes a student in the **Career and Academic Preparation Program** at **Malaspina University-College** who demonstrates exceptional dedication and motivation in returning to learning and overcoming significant barriers. He will receive this award on September 28, 2006.

Don had to drop his schooling at a young age in order to work. Years later, he came to the conclusion that “in today’s society everything seems to apply to some math.” He decided to take math courses in **Adult Basic Education** at **Malaspina**. Don began to work with his volunteer tutor, **Doug Reeves**, in the fall of 2004 when he started *Fundamental Math 020*. The following year he progressed to *Intermediate Math 030*. Don knows that he has come a long way. He takes time to grasp material, but once he does so, he demonstrates such a thorough knowledge that he achieves marks in the 90s. “It is hard to believe that

I have come so far. Everyone helped out and showed concern.”

But, those who have worked with Don give him the credit. **Iris Strong**, Don’s *Fundamental Math* instructor enjoyed working with Don and missed him when he moved onto a higher level math class. “He brought such a positive, cheerful, enthusiastic attitude of commitment and hard work to the classroom., and I valued his gentle, respectful nature.”

**Doug Reeves**, Don’s volunteer tutor, points with enthusiasm to Don’s strength in mental arithmetic, as



well as his dedication and perfect attendance despite the distance he has to travel from Lantzville.

Doug Reeves, left with Don Sim, right

We would like to extend our best wishes and congratulations to Don on this outstanding achievement.

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## Achievement Awards

The Tutor Program recognizes the achievements of learners with the presentation of certificates. These achievements may include: specific tasks, workbooks, modules, courses completed; literacy and numeracy skills mastered; improved study skills or work habits.



We celebrate learners’ achievements, with a photo of the tutor and learner, prominently displayed at **Literacy Nanaimo**. This small tribute may be very meaningful especially for learners who have received little positive feedback about their learning. Let us know if your learner deserves recognition and we will be happy to make up a certificate.

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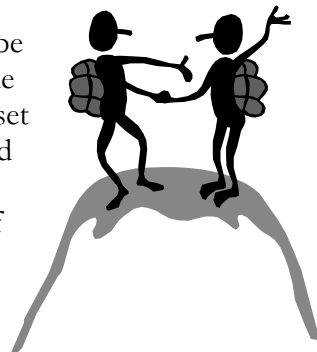
## Communication Skills Workshop

On June 21, 2006, 11 tutors attended the workshop presented by **K. Susan Shaw**, Acting Coordinator, Human Rights Office at *Malaspina U-C*.

Susan began the workshop by asking the tutors for comments about their individual concerns. Many of the comments related to the challenges the learners face every day, including their physical and emotional well-being. The many outside influences the learners face on a daily basis are often a stumbling block to learning.

How do we as tutors motivate the learners when so much else is happening in their lives? Good communication between tutor and learner is essential in order to overcome the stumbling blocks. Some of the basics the tutor can employ include knowing yourself, listening first, speaking second, being non-judgmental, and knowing when it is time to do a reality check.

Discernable problems should be discussed and goals set with the learner. As tutors, we need to set boundaries for our learners and ourselves. The tutor/learner relationship is like a journey of discovery for both parties. Despite all the obstacles, hope is very important to all concerned. Sometimes the only way to achieve this is to take a day-by-day approach.



The tutors stayed after the workshop for a networking session on future workshops. We discussed the length of time for the workshop, when they should be held, and some ideas for future workshops.

Submitted by Volunteer Tutor, **Vivian Streader**

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## Fall Tutoring Program








We are running our **Fall Tutor Training program** September 26 to October 26, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1-4 pm at *Malaspina U-C*. There are still seats available. If you have enjoyed being part of the Tutor Program and know anyone who is interested in becoming a literacy tutor, please tell him or her to give us a call at *Literacy Nanaimo*.




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## Tips for Tutors: Giving Feedback

How you give constructive feedback can motivate learners to further effort.

-  It is important to acknowledge what a learner is doing right;
-  Praise should specify the accomplishment. Try to point out exactly what is good about the work;
-  Don't use "No". Focus on the positive;
-  Don't forget to ask how things are going or what she feels she could do better;
-  Give her the opportunity to practice problem-solving skills.

Do not cover a learner's work with red or blue marks:

-  It is very discouraging and does not serve any useful purpose;
-  Use patterns of errors to teach concepts;
-  Encourage learners to reread their own work and find mistakes themselves.

Adapted from:

*Trainer's Manual Literacy Volunteer Resources*

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## In Memory of Russell LeBlanc October 25, 1958 - May 19, 2006

We regret to announce the passing of our fellow volunteer tutor, **Russell Leblanc**, on May 19, 2006 at the age of 47. Russell had just completed the Spring Tutor Training Program, and, despite his own serious



challenges, was enthusiastic at the prospect of being a tutor. Russell had a keen interest in helping people and felt privileged to be able to assist others in reaching their potential. Russell's attitude is an inspiration to all of us. Russell had degrees in Law Procedure as well as Business Administration and he will be receiving an honorary degree (BA, Political Science) from the University of Toronto. The celebration will be held on October 25, 2006.

We wish his family and friends great comfort in his memory.