



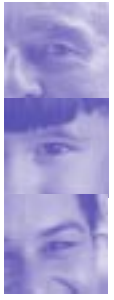
Literacy Partners of Manitoba

WRITE ON!

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Families Reach Out for Literacy



David and his Auntie enjoy story time together at the Aboriginal Headstart program in Brandon.

Recognizing strong literacy skills as one of the keys to a positive and fulfilling future for Manitobans, Premier Gary Doer proclaimed January 27 as **Family Literacy Day**. "Solid literacy skills are instrumental in providing our youth with the opportunity to realize their dreams and succeed in their educational pursuits," said Doer. Across the province in city and town, communities celebrated family literacy.

Brandon

In Brandon, **Aboriginal Headstart** and the **West Region Coalition** hosted their second Annual Family Reading Day. More than sixty people attended. After a pancake break-

fast, the event included book making, face painting, and story time with celebrity readers. (See picture above.)

Flin Flon

A Reading Circle was held at the **Flin Flon Public Library** on January 27, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Nearly 140 people gathered over the three hours to experience a variety of books, drama, and song. Celebrity Readers included three of the the Flin Flon Junior Bombers, the school superintendent, an RCMP officer, a retired teacher, and Flin Flon's Trout Festival Queen and Second Princess. The youngest guest, four-day-old Shona, was one of more than 100 winners of books

donated by various local businesses (see list on page 16). For the third successive year, the community gathered together for a celebration of reading, learning, and having fun. "Every place is a learning place" — this was especially true of the Flin Flon Library on 27 January, 2001.

Carman

Prominent members of the community gathered at the Carman Family Resource Centre to read a favourite story from their own childhood. **Carol Ann Dracass**, Mother Goose facilitator; **Debra Kattler**, Carman Chamber of Commerce; **Mr. Bruce Wood**, Principal, Carman Collegiate; **Dr. Aaron Snidal**, dentist; **Mr. George McDonald**, Healthy Communities, Carman; **Mr. Lloyd Kitching**, local storyteller; **Mrs. Bev Lotscher**, Grade 3 teacher, Carman Elementary; and **Mrs. Francine Lee**, lawyer, entertained about 35 people throughout the afternoon. **Golden Prairie Arts Council** donated 2 tickets to the Heather Bishop concert and these were used as a door prize draw. It was a great day! (Continued on p. 3)



INSIDE

- 3. [Family Literacy Day Highlights](#)
- 4. [Family Literacy Day Articles](#)
- 6. [News from the Regions](#)
- 10. [From the Library](#)
- 11. [LPM Outreach](#)
- 14. [Learners' Page](#)
- 15. [Grammatically Speaking](#)
- 16. [LPM Launches Endowment Fund](#)
- 18. [Literacy News in Brief](#)
- 20. [Upcoming Events](#)

Editorial

by Charles Moody

Family Literacy is our focus in this issue. Recently, a principal in Nova Scotia walked out of his school and into the homes of the parents in his community to impress upon them the importance of reading before the children come to school. Schools were always intended to provide equal opportunity, to bring children to their full potential despite the differences in their family background. However, the principal was acknowledging what every teacher and most parents know: that the skills the children bring into school determine what they take out.

An abundance of research shows that those early preschool years are the most important in the development of the child's literacy skills. Unfortunately, some parents do not have the reading skills themselves or the confidence to read with their young children. Family Literacy programs help to give parents that confidence and promote child and adult literacy at the same time.

Individual stories tell of the impact of family literacy programs on families who participate. **Terrie Moar** recalls a mother from her family literacy program who, after creating a poem about her child, said: "I always loved my child, now I can put it into words."

Family literacy is our cover story. We have also included an article by **Alexis Harvey** of Minnedosa, written on behalf of LPM for *Winnipeg Parent Magazine*, and by **Marge Warkentin** of Flin Flon.

Adult literacy is our other *raison d'être*. As Literacy Partners of Manitoba, we send best wishes to one of our most respected adult literacy institutions, formerly known as WVRA, but henceforth to be called **LiteracyWORKS**. (See story on page 15.) One of their students, **Sim Sellars**, says it best:

From Today On

From today on I am learning to read and write.

From today on.

Today I shall attend LiteracyWORKS.

And every day, no matter how hard it gets, I shall say:

From today on I will study hard.

From today on.

President's Report

by Sylvia Provenski

A recent issue of PC Magazine states that "whether you run a public web site or a private intranet, a discussion server (also called an electronic conference service) is a must-have to create a sense of community." Literacy Partners' board of directors, as well as a number of Manitoba practitioners, have had the opportunity to be part of a larger literacy community as participants of an NLS project called E-NorthWest. (See article on page 9.) Since last fall they have been exploring the First Class electronic conferencing service, allowing them to be part of a network that includes literacy practitioners from British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan.

Use of the electronic conference format has greatly increased communication amongst board members, many of whom reside outside of Winnipeg. It has also allowed board members quick and easy access to literacy information, and discussions with literacy practitioners and coalitions across Western Canada, the NWT and Nunavut.

Another of the many benefits of an electronic conference service is the reduced cost of sharing information. This service has saved LPM hundreds of dollars by reducing the amount of long distance calls, faxes, and the length of board teleconferences.

Further expansion of the electronic conference to the literacy field is being explored. Imagine a time when literacy boards, practitioners and learners are in electronic touch from coast to coast to coast! Admittedly, it's not quite the same, but even now, it's possible to attend a conference in London, New York or Hawaii, without leaving the comforting presence of your own computer. We'll keep you posted.

E.D's Report

by Marg Rose

As your representatives in recent national meetings, Sylvia and I lent a Manitoba perspective to ensure involvement in several exciting new directions for literacy development this past quarter:

- Consultation on a proposal to establish a common electronic platform for email, document sharing, interprovincial conferencing and "Ask an expert" services via the First Class software through an E-Northwest partnership with Literacy BC, Alberta Association for Adult Literacy, Saskatchewan Literacy Network, NWT Literacy Coalition and LPM via the NLS. Go to <http://aaal.ab.ca>
- Briefings on the new Key Performance Indicators to evaluate the success of literacy projects, funded by the National Literacy Secretariat. Our fall conference will feature a workshop on measuring outcomes, or the On-Site rigorous financial analysis process that I took part in over four days with the PGI national committee. Whew – what an experience! Numbers tell quite a story!
- Investigation of a possible Manitoba pilot of the Certified Literate Communities model that is highly successful in Georgia and the Cornwall, Ontario, regions, making literacy an economic strategy for community development, taking the social marketing thrust to a local level.
- Knocking on hundreds of business doors in a feasibility study to raise money for an Endowment Fund. (See page 16.)
- Consultation with MCL and NALD on the E-Government on-line strategy with 200 federal communication officers in Ottawa on plain language and access issues to avoid the digital divide.

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Family Literacy Day Highlights

Winkler



Family Literacy Day at PVLC

The **Pembina Valley Learning Centre** in Winkler held their annual family day on January 26. The spouses and children of the learners were invited to spend the afternoon at the Centre during regular class time. Family members visited the classrooms and participated in the other activities planned for them. The afternoon ended with parents, children and staff gathering in the coffee room to enjoy the tasty valentine cookies decorated by the kids. Before they left, the children were given “Family Literacy Day” buttons and other treats to add to the candles, valentine cards, and bracelets they had created themselves. Everyone agreed it had been a wonderful afternoon and a great opportunity for family members to learn more about what goes on at the learning centre.



Grace Schellenberg reads to children in Winkler

In the evening more than 80 people crowded into the children’s section of the library to listen to stories read by **June Kehler, James Klassen, Deb Kauenhofen, Grace Schellenberg** and **Sarah Loewen** (Miss Winkler). A very successful evening!

Steinbach

Families in Steinbach celebrated literacy at the Clearspring Village Mall, reading and telling stories. At the **Jake Epp Library**, two 20 minute performances of frog theme stories, rhymes and songs were held, interspersed with Literacy Day fast facts. The afternoon concluded with a draw for a bookbag stuffed with two books and other goodies.

Winnipeg



Len Udow entertains in the St Vital Library

Winnipeg Public Library joined together with LPM to host several events. The afternoon began with entertainment. At Centennial, **Kinfolk**, a mother and daughters trio, involved the children in several action songs. At St. Vital, **Len Udow** performed “Fifteen Minutes a Day”, a song especially composed for Family Literacy Day. The audience at Sir William Stevenson was entertained by **Sandra Mae Reimer** and **Lynda Rajna**. Storytime followed.

Rhonda Taylor of Frontier College set up a display at Chapters on Empress. Children participated in story time, crafts, games, and an “I Love to Read” contest for a book donated by Chapters.

Outside McNally Robinson’s Bookstore at Grant Park Mall, **Marcelline Moody** led the choir of Ecole Robert Browning in a performance of her own compositions “I Love

to Read” and “Everybody Read a Book”. Shoppers abandoned their purchasing for a while and joined in the singing.

*Put your heart into Family Literacy,
Everybody read a book,
Every week take a book from the library,
Everybody read a book.*



Ecole Robert Browning outside McNally Robinson’s Bookstore at Grant Park Mall

“Every place is a Learning Place” was the focus of a free family fun and learning day at **Bookmates Family Literacy Centre** in the St. John’s Library. Replicas of a car, bathtub, bed, kitchen, and livingroom area were activity sites where parents and children had fun with books, a Storysack, face paints, car games and traffic signs, playdough, bathtub book-making, and crafts. More than 35 parents and children joined Bookmates for their “come and go” event. Each hour everyone gathered together for a rousing rhyme circle and drew door prizes donated by community partners. Much thanks to generous community partners and some very dedicated volunteers who helped create the centres and manned them with enthusiasm.

Bookmates Family Literacy Centre Hosts Grand Opening

Bookmates Family Literacy Centre hosted a grand opening of its facilities at St. John’s Library on Thursday afternoon, January 25, 2001. More than 50 people from Family Resource Centres, daycares, schools, Baby First, Early Start, and Volunteens attended from across the province to explore Bookmates’ resources and programs. Call 582-1804 for information.

The Long-Term Impact of Family Literacy

by Marge Warkentin

The more we get together, together, together, the more we get together, The happier we'll be. . . 'Cause your friends are my friends, and my friends are your friends. . .

For the past seven years, Flin Flon preschool children and their parents (or caregivers) have been "getting together" as participants in the local family literacy program, **Read to Me**. The program has developed around the philosophy that "a parent is the child's first and most important teacher."

To date there have been thirteen 8-week sessions offered. Approximately 133 families have participated since 1995, including 185 children. A day at **Read to Me** includes a Circle Time (books, songs, finger plays, prop bag, games), an Adult Group Time (information about reading to children, parenting videos, guest speakers), a craft and a snack. The three-hour day is centered on themes such as "Friends", "Nutrition", "Winter", etc. A large take-home library and incentives provide encouragement for families to establish reading as a valued activity within their home.

Long Term Impact

What has the long-term impact of **Read to Me** been on participating families? Has it made a difference for the children, for the adults, or for the family? To find out, I contacted some of the families, asking them to reflect on their experiences.

"I was surprised," said one parent from a 1998 program, "because we as parents never really read to our children. Now we seem to have quite a library full of books and read daily to our children."

Another family who attended in 1995, and now has a daughter in Grade 3, responded that ever since their involvement in "Read to Me", they have had a 20-minute "Family Read" every day. This means that for the past five years, whoever was at home, including a teenaged son, would sit down to enjoy books together at "Family Read" time!

Three of the families indicated that their involvement in **Read to Me** provided an av-

enue for Dad to become involved in reading to their child or children. For each of these three families, the male parent did not directly attend the sessions, but the bag of new books to read that came home on Tuesdays and Thursdays obviously inspired involvement of the whole family.

For some parents, new ways of reading to children were not only discussed, but modeled at **Read to Me**.

"It taught me to be patient when reading to my children. I now let them interrupt with questions."

"I learned ways to make stories interesting to my children. I still read to my children who are 9 and 11-1/2 years old."

"When my children feel stressed with a problem in their lives, reading is the answer. There are books on most topics suitable for different ages of children."

One of the goals of **Read to Me** is to develop the love of books by presenting reading as a fun experience. *"It helped her to like and to enjoy reading,"* said one parent, *"which in turn helped her to have an easier time learning to read."*

Several of the families found that their child's involvement in the family literacy program helped their child to develop a longer attention span. *"Read to Me helped my granddaughter to be able to settle down and listen. . . and to take instruction from someone other than myself."* These are attributes that help a child adjust to the school setting and kindergarten.

Read to Me is located in McIsaac School – Ecole McIsaac, one of the elementary schools in Flin Flon. During our "Parent Group" parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's school by attending Parent/Teacher Conferences and by volunteering in the school. *"I was glad to help in my son's classroom when his teacher asked for parents to help,"* responded one parent.

Some parents, as a result of attending a family literacy program, have become more aware of educational opportunities for them-

selves. One parent's response: *"I have now become a student at the Community Adult Learning Centre and am now taking courses in reading, grammar, handwriting, spelling, and math."*

Reading as a Family Activity

Read to Me has provided an opportunity for families in the Flin Flon area to experience a learning program together as a family. In addition, the program also meets many social needs of the family. Listen to how they describe it:

"It helped my son to meet and mix with other children. . . and to speak more."

"It introduced her to other children who would be her classroom peers in the future."

"The Parent Time gave me an opportunity to share with other parents who had similar concerns."

"Our child was extremely shy. She needed an environment with other children that still had Mom there, too!"

"There was free time to help the children learn to share with others. . . and to get along with other children."

"I did not know other parents. There I met other parents. It helped me mix with others."

From the responses received from parents, I believe the impact of family literacy in our community, although difficult to measure, is long-term and vast. *"Read to Me gives children a good start in their learning life,"* shared one grandparent who has custody of her grandchild. *"It also gave me hope as we were having difficulties."*

When Mom (or Dad) has an outlet, some new ideas, some new coping skills – everyone benefits. The simple act of learning together is and has proven to be a marvelous educational and binding experience. Children who receive new enthusiasm, new friends, and new skills are happier; so the family experiences less upheaval from boredom or loss of self-esteem.

When asked: "Is there anything that happens in your family today that is directly connected to your involvement in **Read to Me**," one parent summed it up with: "THE LOVE OF READING!!!"



Family Literacy – Opportunity Knocks at Wellington School

by Alexis Harvey

On behalf of Literacy Partners of Manitoba, Alexis Harvey has been writing a series of articles on family literacy for Winnipeg Parent magazine. One of these articles, on Lucy Carter's program at Wellington School, is reprinted below.

"Wellington School Family Literacy Program is about parents and children improving their reading and writing skills together," says facilitator Lucy Carter when describing her fascinating program — a program that seems somewhat like the tip of a mysterious, floating iceberg.

In September, Lucy welcomes interested families in the school area to come and participate in a community-based literacy program established more than three years ago. Moms, dads and children can attend together.

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, these families get together at the school to devote time to writing their own stories about important happenings or memorable events, such as a family trip, a wedding or a special toy. The project finishes up in June. Those of us who peek through the doors of Wellington School are intrigued as the writing process unfolds.

As parents and their preschoolers settle in by 1:30 p.m., gathering time gets underway. Children and their parents take part in a variety of inviting activities. Story time is interactive for the families. Selected readers share and model valuable "read aloud" techniques while offering their audience a variety of "good books".

Later, parents themselves prepare for a bookmaking project that will include their children's input. Learning the basics of language and grammar starts early in the pro-



gram for parents as they carefully examine and refer to a variety of children's books as a unique way to understand how to express themselves. For those families with school-age children at Wellington School, parents and children meet later in the school day on a regular basis. Together, they begin to conference in preparation for stories that might be used as a basis for their family remembrances.

Computer training is also offered to parents so that the family's collection of short stories can be word-processed with pictures added in a book format. Their children assist in the book making activity as they use their own knowledge of computer and acquired skills. While the process takes weeks to complete, facilitator Lucy Carter emphasizes that the collection of remembrances is "highly treasured by all".

Immediate outcomes of the Wellington Family Literacy Program are obvious. Notable is the enjoyment and reward that parents have reaped from the writing process that has developed. Parents can choose to go on to upgrade their own skills in other adult education programs at Wellington School. Classes in computer, GED and adult literacy are offered at this location. A new

addition, Tickle and Treasures, involving playtime with storybooks and simple book-making, attracts families with very young children.

Lucy describes her program as continually evolving to meet new needs, and emphasizes that family literacy is a natural and beautiful vehicle for learning and sharing together. Families spend time together — reading and writing their stories, learning about computers, and furthering the lifelong learning process. Beyond the obvious improvement in literacy skills, family members benefit from stronger bonds between parents and children, and circles of friendship widen for both generations.

A supportive staff and advisory council, carefully planned and delivered programming, and a welcoming environment are key ingredients in this ongoing program. Valuing parents and children and encouraging them to explore their potential together in a positive environment lead to future success in the outside world. Good things are happening to good people in Wellington School's Family Literacy Program!

For more information about this program, please call Lucy at Wellington School (774-8085). If you are looking for more information about family literacy or have other literacy concerns, please call Literacy Partners of Manitoba at 947-5757 or visit their website at www.mb.literacy.ca



News from the Regions

Is this Spring that seems to be nibbling at the edges of the Ice House that we call Manitoba?

As signs of impending warm weather become apparent, there are several trends visible in IRLN-sponsored events that bode well for the literacy community in the Interlake.

The large numbers of people that participated in activities in Selkirk and Gimli to mark Family Literacy Day, the new learners being served at the new adult programs in Lundar and Eriksdale, the enthusiastic adoption of "I Love to Read" activities in Interlake schools and libraries, the new partnerships with parent/child programs in Pine Falls and Beausejour, and the attendance at the practitioners' and learners' conference in Selkirk all speak of the success that IRLN is having in bringing literacy issues to the fore.

Family Literacy Day

On January 25, 150 parents and kids in Gimli took part in the celebration of family reading. **Carol Goossen** orchestrated the Undercover Reading Adventure at the Gimli Recreation Centre. With the support of the **Gimli Play Group**, Carol had celebrity readers **Lori Hoogstraten**, **Brian Richardson** and others read to the tiny tots in eight tents set up inside the rec centre. Groups would shift to new tents every fifteen minutes.

As their salute to Family Literacy Day on January 27, the **Growing Years Family Resource Centre** held a Pancake Breakfast which brought a 100 kids and parents to the Selkirk Friendship Centre. I helped flip pancakes, gave out balloons, and talked to parents about reading. Magicians **Bill Brace** and his grandson **Cary Tardi** provided the kids with a super show. Thanks to the staff at **Growing Years** and all of the volunteers for making the event such a positive one for highlighting reading as an important part of family life.

Aloma Zastre, last year's regional learner rep, demonstrated her strong commitment to the literacy community by accompanying me on visits to programs and talking to learners about our conference. She has been listening to learners' suggestions of workshop topics and has facilitated discussions about the event.

The Learners' Speakers Bureau has had several meetings at the **Evergreen Regional Library** in Gimli. Workshops have been held on topics such as organizing an autobiographic speech, tips to ease nervousness, and how to take minutes at a meeting. The last topic was open to all learners

From the Interlake

by Rob Sarginson



at the Gimli evening program's regular class and was presented on January 23 by **Elaine Elliot**.

On February 10, the Gimli Play Group, **Carol Goossen's family literacy program** presented the Evergreen Regional Library with 20 Parent Reading Packs. The Packs are bags of age-appropriate books for parents to read with pre-schoolers up to four years of age. Also in the pack is a cassette with music which has a similar theme to the books.

Several pieces of advice are included to help the parent use the materials to maximize their positive impact with their children. The Parent Packs were created using an NLS grant. These resources will be a real help to parents using the Gimli library.

Crossing the Interlake

During the last few weeks I have managed to visit almost all of the programs in the Interlake. For example, on February 12, on a trip of almost 400 kilometres, I visited **Dorrie Kiesman** at the new IALA program at Lundar and met a class of learners working hard on their reading and writing skills. On the way back to Selkirk, I caught **David Smith's class in Fisher Branch** and talked to them about the conference.

After consultations with regional practitioners about **computer training for volunteer tutors**, a session on e-mail and internet was held on Saturday, February 17, in Arborg. About a dozen literacy tutors, students, and instructors took part. **Glen**

Timshishen guided participants through the workshop and did a wonderful job. Another tutor workshop will be scheduled for Beausejour in the spring.

On February 21, a pizza dinner celebrating family literacy was held at the **Happy Tot Place** in Pine Falls. About 30 parents and children ate, read and heard my presentation about good reading practices. Through my work (and the good advice of **Linda Pleskach**), links were established between this mainly native resource centre and the local library. I will be visiting both, so as to strengthen the connection.

On February 26, I attended a meeting at the "**Clubhouse**" at 172 Sherbrook. This centre provides employment, training and social opportunities for those recovering from mental illness. Clubhouse has about 100 regulars who have meals, do jobs around the centre, take literacy upgrading, and do computer literacy activities. **Mark Elie**, the executive director, is interested in acquiring funding for the basic literacy component.

On March 3, as part of the IRLN's regional library network, I participated in the second annual Gimli Community Spelling Bee sponsored by Gimli's Friends of the Library committee. The Aspire Theatre was packed with former teachers of spelling (and enthusiastic amateurs) to watch four teams battle down to the wire. The IRLN team finished one point behind the winners (because of Tuktoyaktuk) but had a wonderful time all the same. This event started last year with IRLN encouragement and continues to grow as a regular part of consciousness-raising about literacy in the Interlake.

March Learners' Conference: "Learn to Survive"

Wasn't that a party? What a wonderful time was had by all! A hundred learners, tutors, and presenters from all parts of the region attended our "Learn to Survive" Conference in Selkirk on March 10.

The purpose of this conference was to support the literacy programs in the region by bringing learners into contact with others who are facing the same struggles that they are. The conference allows them to seek answers to the questions that they have

News from the Regions



Carol Goossen and her learners give a cheer for Arborg in the "Survivor Games"

through the workshops and activities. For some learners it becomes an occasion to use newly developed higher order skills: that of organizer, of public speaker, and even of presenter.

Tutors and practitioners value the opportunities for meeting, exchanging ideas with confreres, and taking advanced training. The conference offers a shared experience for practitioners to build upon in their classes.

By holding the event in early March, there is still time for practitioners to create opportunities for writing (thank you notes, letters to learners in other programs, journal entries, stories about the conference) and discussion (evaluating the day, the learnings, areas for future study).

Even the very single-minded GED student finds the day to be a success. Coming for a session on job preparation, the GED learner enjoys the self-help sessions even more. As **Margaret Chambers** says, "the conference helps everyone's world get just a bit bigger." Among the good things that NLS funding has done, the regional learner conferences rank as one of the best.

The Conference this year was held in Selkirk (where the sun always shines). **Carol Goossen** once again did the organizing and **Rob Sarginson** acted as MC.

A dozen workshops of one and two hour duration dealt with topics such as Coping

with Depression and Anger, Walking for Health, Nutrition, Activities to Do with Small Children, First Aid, and Music and Drama.

A Storysacks workshop with about twenty participants assembled a complete Storysack which was then won by **Roberta Anderson** of Selkirk's **Rhyme and Reason Family Program**. Practitioners and tutors took a session from ALCE's **Regina Ramos-Urbano** about Math Resources on the Computer.

A highlight of the noon hour was the visit from **Evans Coffie**, the renowned drummer from Ghana who shared his great skills and the story of his own struggle to survive in his escape from his homeland and his miraculous arrival in snowy Winnipeg. Using the talking drum, Mr. Coffie, brought another dimension to our conference theme.

Tribal Warfare

The day concluded with another part of the "Learn to Survive" theme - survival sports competition. "Tribes" representing each of the communities competed in a variety of survival activities such as "Passing the Pineapple", "Spearing the Sardine" and the incredible "Stacking the Blocks" (so as to build a hut). The tribe with the highest scores was the first to pick their prizes from the gift table at the end of the day.

Evaluations of the workshops revealed the great appreciation for the high calibre of

presenters, and participants' satisfaction with the content. The conference evaluations were overwhelming in their endorsement of the 2001 Interlake Practitioner and Learners' Conference.

Thanks to Our Guests

Thanks to **Barbara Wynes** who brought greetings from ALCE, to Selkirk's Mayor, **Bud Oliver**, for his welcome to the City of Selkirk, to **Lynda Taylor** and the members of the **Winnipeg Learner Speakers' Bureau** who joined our conference, to the learners who attended from Steinbach, to **Dorrie Kiesman** and his new learners and tutors (who have just begun their programs at Lundar and Eriksdale), to **Shirley Skogan** and the afternoon and evening classes at Selkirk's Independent Adult Learning Centre who made the decorations, to **Arlene Francis**, the manager of the Gordon Howard Seniors Centre, for all of her help in accessing the facilities, to learners and tutors **Aloma Zastre, Lorraine Smith, Marie Easter, Margaret Chambers, Shirley Skogan, Lee Tavares-Jacubek, and Lloyd Lovell**, who helped make the proceedings go so smoothly. Thank you to the amazing **Carol Goossen** who once again made magic happen at our conference. Finally, let us not forget the far-sighted **Lise Labonte** at NLS for authorizing the grant that makes this conference go.

Appreciative Comments

Here are a sampling of comments heard at or after the conference :

An exhausted learner : *"I am really tired, Rob, but I really like this (conference)"*

An exhausted organizer : *"This was the best one ever!"*

Pensive practitioners : *"These learners are so grateful to have an event like this to go to and be accepted for who they are." And "It is important to realize that there are more than just literacy issues which should be addressed in our programs"* (with reference to the high numbers in the Stress, Anger and Depression, and Nutrition workshops)

A learner : *"I loved meeting everyone from everywhere!"* and another: *"Let's have this more often and longer."*

News from the Regions

Family Literacy Day

In all, one hundred and forty people representing fifty-one families came for the annual event in the Centennial Public Library, organized by **Marge Warkentin** and her Family Literacy Day Committee. As in past years, the Reading Circle featured guest readers including members of the Flin Flon Bombers Junior Hockey Team, RCMP, Rotary Club, and the reigning Miss Queen Mermaid.

The Reading Circle attendance continues to rise each year on Family Literacy Day, as the children enjoy not only story telling, but also singing and visits from Marge's husband in the role of the Professor. This year, every child was able to take home a gift of a new book and a family literacy day pin. As well, they entered draws to win other prizes including a book shelf. Thanks, once again, to our great sponsors.

From the North

by Margaret Allan

In **Thompson**, Family Literacy Day was advertised as a Teddy Bears' Picnic, and sixty parents and children came with about forty assorted bears. **Cheryl Nicholson** and her pool of volunteers organized the picnic. This year, instead of at the library, Family Literacy Day was celebrated in a vacant,



carpeted retail space in the city's main shopping mall between 10:30 a.m. and noon so that the children would be home in time for lunch and their afternoon nap.

As part of the morning's activities, all of the children and parents had the opportunity to make water-

proof picture books, using ziplock bags, sewn inside coloured craft paper on the front and back. In the quieter moments, there were story circles. **Laura Bennett of Thompson Children's World Day Care Centre** read the tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears using a large cloth background



Teddy Bears draw families to read together

with velcro stick-on-peel-off characters. Laura encouraged the children to take part, and many of them chimed in with well-known parts of the story.

Smokey the Bear made a guest appearance and gave each of the children a balloon and pencil. There were also draws for two large teddy bears and a selection of children's books.

Children's Story Contest

This year, in conjunction with Family Literacy Day and "I Love To Read" Month, the *Thompson Citizen* newspaper sponsored a Children's Short Story Contest. The story topic was "How We Enjoy Reading in our Family". Unfortunately only three children entered. However, all three stories were published and each received a \$40 prize.

Adult Literacy Conference

Students from Norway House, Cross Lake, Lynn Lake, Thompson and The Pas signed up for this year's **Soaring into the Future** conference at the Victoria Inn in Flin Flon, featuring workshops on pencil drawing, recycling and diabetes to name just a few. More on the conference next issue.



Winnie the Pooh, Mom, and toddlers at Thompson's Teddy Bears' Picnic on Family Literacy Day

News from the Regions

Hello everyone! Well, spring is officially here, but someone forgot to inform the weather god to turn up the heat. They tell me it will warm up eventually.

Family Literacy Day

A huge thank you is extended to the three literacy programs in the West Region that hosted a family literacy day event. **Brandon Friendship Centre** hosted their annual family reading day with approximately 60 people in attendance. We were treated to a pancake breakfast, graciously cooked and served by the staff of the **Aboriginal Head Start Program** and **Gail Cullen**, Executive Director of the Brandon Friendship Centre. The parents and children in attendance were invited to make a book for the family to enjoy at home. It was quite interesting to watch the materials unfold. Several story centres were set up around the center and were enjoyed by all in attendance.

The LEARN program in **Roblin** also hosted a Family Literacy Day event. A series of story time sessions was developed and will be offered in the Roblin Library.

The final program to report an event coinciding with Family Literacy Day was PULSE/PlayFirst from **Minnedosa**. They invited a local author **Pat Bowslaugh** to come and present her book that she has published. Entertainment and dessert followed.

Consultation Process

Several members of the West Region attended a follow-up meeting in regards to the Consultation Process (which was held in November 2000), on March 5, 2001. (See full story on Page 17) The group met to discuss the five major outcomes from the Consultation Process. We were split into five smaller advisory committees and further discussions took place. Under the objective of funding, it was decided that we needed further information before any recommendations could be made. To this end, I met with the other regional coordinators on April 2nd.

From the West

by Alanna Hillis

Learners' Conference

The annual Learners' Conference will be held in Portage La Prairie this year on April 19 & 20, 2001, at the Southport Centre. This event is co-hosted by the West Region Coalition and the Community Headways Literacy Program from Portage. The workshops that will be offered are First Aid, Learner Speakers' Training, Storysack Making, Rubberstamping, Scrapbooking, Relaxation Techniques, Self-Defense, Nutrition Discussions, and a Tour of the Stevenson Aviation Centre. To date there are 102 people registered to participate in the Conference. I am looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Training Sessions

The West Region will be hosting a Mother Goose training session on May 11 & 12, 2001, in Brandon. Anyone wishing to attend or requiring further information, please just give me a call and I will be happy to provide the information requested.

In January, the West Region hosted a Storysack Training session in Brandon. We had a really good turnout. As a result of this training, **Patricia Damjanoff**, a member of the Shilo Family Literacy Centre, produced two very lovely Storysacks. She will be facilitating the Storysack Workshop that will be held at the Learners' Conference and her two Sacks will be on display. Congratulations, Patricia, for a job well done.



Stephanie, Caitlin and friend at the BFC

Pathways Project Flourishes



Former Samaritan House students Theresa McDonald(l) and Alia Duku(r) with Pathways Coordinator Sylvia Provenski at BALC.

The pathways pilot project in Brandon allows more effective transitions or "pathways" between one level of education and the next. As a result of the Pathways Pilot Project, students will be able to move between the literacy programs, Brandon Adult Learning Centre and Assiniboine Community College with greater ease. Currently students attending Brandon literacy programs have the opportunity to take two selected Brandon Adult Learning Centre courses (two half credit courses) which can be used as credits towards their Mature Student High School diploma.

End Isolation

There is no substitute for the face-to-face meeting, but perhaps, in the 21st Century, we can all keep in touch electronically. Why not participate in our new electronic conferencing service called First Class which is keeping literacy practitioners in touch across our Western provinces and territories?

An electronic conferencing platform is a web site where messages from subscribers to the service are listed to be read by other subscribers. The messages are stored in "conferences" or categories determined by the common interest of a group or by a particular topic under discussion. Members of the service log on to the web site in order to communicate with each other and to share ideas. For a scattered literacy community, the electronic conference is an ideal means of communicating and sharing.

Contact Sylvia Provenski to sign on.

From the Library

by Linda Dubasov

They say that time flies when you are having fun. If that is true, there is no question that I am having the time of my life in the Resource Centre! It seems like only yesterday that I was writing the December newsletter article and wishing everyone a happy holiday. Yet today is the first day of Spring! The weeks in between do indeed seem to have flown by.

Former librarian **Bunny Cobb** spent the first week of January working with me, weeding, or in library parlance, *deselecting*, and reorganizing the collection. Her wise counsel and expertise were most appreciated as the hard decisions – what to keep, what to discard, what to move – were made. It was an intense few days! As always, discards are available to members on a first-come, first-serve basis. We still have about 175 items available for give away.

As a result of our efforts, there appears to be much more room on the library shelves than usual. This will, of course, not last.

Our partnerships (as reported in my last column) with the **Manitoba Association of Workplace Educators (MAWEC)**, the **Workplace Education Steering Committee (WEMSC)** and **Employment Projects of Winnipeg (EPW)**, have resulted in several boxes of materials arriving at the Resource Centre. I will be kept busy cataloguing these over the next few months. Look on the listserv and in future newsletters for more details on these materials.



Jeff Kerr and Jocelyn Starr (r) of ASEC discuss materials with Marilyn Day at the LPM Library Open House

Early in February I visited the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation. Special thanks to **Rhonda McCorrison** and **Marti Ford** for showing me around the Centre and providing an overview of the wide variety of programming they provide. It is so interesting to get out into the community and spend time visiting our member programs. This is certainly one of the things I hope to do a great deal more of in the future.

In March we held an Open House at the LPM library for our colleagues from the **Adult Secondary Education Council** and **Adult Literacy and Continuing Education**. This was a chance for them to become familiar with LPM's collection of resources for learners at all levels, and perhaps more importantly, the Open House provided an opportunity for dialoguing between our groups—something that does not happen often enough!

Learner Conferences

I spent March 10 in **Selkirk** at the *Learn to Survive Annual Learning Conference* and March 15 and 16 in Flin Flon at the *Soaring into the Future Adult Literacy Conference*. Thank you very much to **Rob Sarginson**, Interlake Regional Coordinator, and **Margaret Allan**, Northern Regional Coordinator, for inviting me to attend.

We had two displays in **Selkirk**. The first was a display of numeracy materials set up in conjunction with **Regina Ramos-**

Urbano's workshop presentation to tutors on numeracy resources for adult learners. The second display provided a sampling of a wide variety of Resource Centre materials, for both tutors and learners.

In **Flin Flon** we again set up a display of materials of interest to both learners and tutors and I also provided a workshop on Resource Centre Resources and Services. This was a terrific opportunity to get to know some of the tutors from

the North. I found the discussion about various programs and their unique challenges most interesting. I trust that we can continue this dialogue over the coming months.

I hope that the conference participants learned something from me about the Resource Centre. I know that I learned a great deal just by being there—what a marvelous experience for someone fairly new to the literacy field! My thanks to each and every one of you.

I hope you enjoy this new “double-page spread” from the Library. We're still in the preliminary stages of creation, so let us know what you would like to see here.

Benefits of Membership.

Elizabeth Plett of the John Howard Society Literacy Program was in the Library earlier this year and picked up some of our discards to take to her program. She sent us a lovely thank you letter (many thanks, Liz!), part of which I quote below:

“The John Howard Society Literacy Program participants, volunteers, and myself want to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks for the recent donation of used books to our program. The books represent an invaluable addition to our program in that we could start a small library at the Winnipeg Remand Centre where none previously existed. The learners at the Headingly Correctional Institute program also benefit by requesting books from a list of titles which I make available to them. Already, we have noticed inmates showing a greater interest in reading and in reading about various subject areas.”

Census Kits for Educators

As you probably know, the Census of Canada will be taking place May 15, 2001. Statistics Canada has developed a special ABE/Literacy Kit for teachers of adult classes. The kit contains classroom-tested activities, a teacher's guide, and student handbooks. To get your copy contact: Debra Edwards, Communications Assistant, Statistics Canada, 2001 Census, 18003-111th Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5S 2P2. Phone: (780) 495-5922; Fax: (780) 495-7689 Email: debra.edwards@statcan.ca

From the Library

New Resources in the Library

The Relationship Book: A Source of Social and Legal Information. 1999. This book, produced by the Prince Edward Island Women's Network, provides information about different types of relationships, the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, how to handle disagreements and conflict, and what you can do if you are in an abusive relationship. **The Facilitator's Guide for The Relationship Book** is also available.

Adult Literacy Now. 2001. A critical reflection on literacy development in Canada. Essays examine the areas of community-based literacy, workplace literacy, family literacy and school-based literacy.

Literacy-Based Support for Young Adults with FAS/FAE. 2000. An investigation of the use of support circles and literacy-based cognitive tools with five FAS/FAE adults, ranging in age from 16 to 34.

Computer Basics 2000. Produced by the Nanaimo Literacy Association, this book provides step-by-step exercises to familiarize students with the computer and various programs, including Windows, Windows Explorer, and the Internet.

Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy. 2000. The Community Services Council of St. John's, Newfoundland states in the introduction to this book that: "the course has been based on the belief that enrollment in A.B.E. gives adult learners the unique ability to co-learn with their children or other young persons in their home environment."

CABS: Common Assessment of Basic Skills: Initial Assessment in 5 Levels. 2000. Based on the learning outcome approach developed by Judith Fox Lee, this assessment is goal-directed and outcomes-based. It encourages the use of various assessment tools, recognizing that there is more than one way for a learner to demonstrate attainment of an outcome.



Linda Dubasov, Judy Baker, Marg Rose, Anna Beauchamp at the Open House for ASEC and ALCE

Computer Corner

The Internet is revolutionizing the way we go about our day-to-day work and the way we learn new things. Here are some sites that may be useful to you and your learners.

<http://learnthenet.com> This is a good resource for anyone just learning how to use the internet. A collection of articles cover topics such as: *Master the Basics*; *Surf the Web*; *Download Files*, etc. The articles include lots of graphics. Some contain sample activities. Reading levels are quite high, so this site is more appropriate to tutors or for learners to use with tutor support. The *Animated Internet* is one resource at this site that may be used by learners independently.

www.englishpractice.com This site includes study by course: a daily guide that helps you pick lessons to study today; study by level: find lessons designed to challenge your personal level of English; study by topic: lessons sorted by topics such as grammar, vocabulary, etc.; cultural lessons: learn how English is used in different cultural situations including jobs; fun lessons, such as hangman and crosswords are also available.

www.spelling.hemscott.net This site is appropriate for adults who find spelling difficult and want to learn to spell correctly. It includes advice about tackling problems and a series of spelling exercises designed to improve skills. This has been used successfully at one of our Winnipeg programs with a learner who wished to improve his spelling skills independently.

www.englishclub.net/grammar This site covers a variety of topics including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, reading and business English. Lessons are available in all of these areas. The instructions are written in such a manner that this site may again require tutor support for students to use. Some of the lessons may be adapted for use in the classroom.

www.englishgrammar101.com Free English grammar tutorials for language arts classes, alternative education settings, home schooling, adult study and ESL courses. Included are sections on word and phrase patterns; clause patterns; verb tense; verb forms.

LPM Outreach

by *Susanne Magyar-Chapiel*

Miles MacDonnell students help create a Storysack for LPM



Mariana Boukailo, Kathy Sexsmith, Ginny Collins and David Tuan of Miles MacDonnell Collegiate display their Storysack

Four students from Miles MacDonnell Collegiate recently helped **Susanne Magyar-Chapiel** (Outreach Coordinator) develop a “demonstration” Storysack for LPM. The storysack will be used to promote the project to community groups (including high schools) as well as the media.

Storysacks must include a Canadian children’s storybook, a related non-fiction book, soft toys of the main characters, a story backdrop, an audio tape of the story, a parent information card, and a few literacy activities that relate to the story.

“I chose Phoebe Gilman’s *Grandma and the Pirates* because it’s a beautifully illustrated and very well written children’s book, and a favorite of my children many years ago,” said Susanne. “It also fits all of the criteria for a Storysack – it’s Canadian, there

are only a few main characters, and it has a relatively simple story line.”

Looking for a volunteer group to partner with, Susanne approached **Mariana Boukailo** of Miles MacDonnell over the Christmas break, and Mariana recruited volunteers to complete the project in early January.

After quite a lot of searching, Susanne found several rag dolls at a Dollar Store. Then, with some felt, scraps of fabric, doll hair and fabric paint, she transformed the dolls into Melissa, the main character, Grandma, and the three pirates. She also purchased a bright green parrot (cat toy) to represent Grandma’s pet, Oliver.

In the meantime, Mariana and her friend **Ginny Collins** brainstormed about the design of the backdrop. “It took us about an hour,” Mariana says, “until we finally came up with the idea for a circular story map instead of backdrop.”

“We went looking for a large piece of blue felt, that we wanted to represent the water in the story, but we couldn’t find any, so we settled for white felt, which we then painted or dabbed blue paint onto, so that it looked pretty much like the ocean.”

“Then, we cut out the land and the islands from other pieces of felt, and marked a golden sailing path from Grandma’s house around several islands, all the way to the

last stop in the story, the island of Boola Boola,” Mariana explained.

Mariana and Ginny recruited two other students to help make an audio-tape of the story.

Kathy Sexsmith was brought in to be the narrator, while **Dave Tuan** became the voice of the pirate captain. Mariana took the part of Melissa, the story’s heroine (and Oliver the parrot), while Ginny played the role of Grandma.

“Kathy had a particularly long and tricky passage in the book to read, recalled Mariana. “Everytime she got to the word pumpernickel she messed up, and we burst out laughing because she just couldn’t do it. Making the tape was a lot of fun for all of us.”

Susanne developed a list of questions that parents could use to help their children understand and explore the story, and a number of word and picture games as well.

The LPM Storysack made its debut at a workshop at the Toronto Public Library on March 14th facilitated by **Marg Rose** for various Ontario organizations.

“Seeing one made so creatively really inspired them,” said Marg, “so we’re certain that Ontario groups will soon be developing Storysacks of their own, joining dozens of groups already working on their sacks across Western Canada.”

For more information on Storysacks, please contact Susanne at the LPM office.

Rural Churches Receive Learnline and Literacy Kits

Some 200 churches in Manitoba received LPM information kits in the mail this winter, in an effort to make them more aware of the literacy needs of Manitobans and the existence of LPM family literacy programs around the province.

The kits were developed by **Marge Warkentin** (Read To Me Coordinator, Flin Flon) and **Susanne Magyar-Chapiel** (Outreach Coordinator).

“Basically, this was our first attempt to reach out to churches and their members in rural Manitoba and introduce them to our organization and programs,” Susanne said.

Marge developed a cover letter to the churches, a contact list of current family literacy programs, as well as an “ABCs of Family Literacy” poster which outlined many of the benefits of family literacy.

The kits also included copies of the LPM membership and Learner Speakers’ Bureau brochures, the yellow Learn Line poster and tear-off pads, and an Oxfam brochure promoting education to stop the cycle of poverty.

Marge followed up by contacting the churches in January to discuss their reaction to the kits and the possibility of further

action with them (speakers, displays, book drives, special collections).

“Many of the churches had put up the posters we had sent, and many had included some of the information in their church bulletins,” said Marge. Several also took Marge up on her offer to send them a copy of LPM’s Directory for Healthy Families, as it sounded like an excellent resource.

All in all, fourteen churches from the communities of Brandon, Swan River, McGregor, Souris, Niverville, Steinbach, Carmen, Winkler and Morden are taking an interest in family literacy.

LPM Outreach

National Volunteer Week: Celebrate Our Unsung Heroes!



Volunteer Shawna Lehr works in the office

National Volunteer Week is fast approaching – it’s from April 22-28 — and this year, because the United Nations has designated 2001 as the **International Year of Volunteers (IYV)**, it’s time to celebrate the contributions of all of our volunteers in a big way!

What are your IYV plans?

Here are a few ideas to help you get started. Nominate your outstanding volunteers for special community awards. Organize a theme party such as an ice cream sundae party or

Mexican fiesta. Give gift certificates or tickets to a special event. Organize a fun event such as a night of bowling or shooting pool (or give IOUs for a round of golf later this spring). Arrange for live entertainment to add excitement to your get-together. Start a Volunteer of the Year Award and invite the local media to attend the awards ceremony. Develop unique ways to recognize different kinds of volunteers: long term volunteers, once-a-year, special-events volunteers, youth volunteers, and your “life-savers”. Roast or toast each of your volunteers for the special things they bring to your program (most cheerful volunteer, fastest copier, most creative, etc.)

Remember! Food, fun, and music are the keys to a great celebration. If possible, spruce up the party area with balloons, streamers, and a large “Thank You Volunteers” banner. Assign someone to take lots of photos for your office bulletin board or newsletter. Make it an event to remember!

LPM Volunteers Rule!

Here at LPM, along with showing volunteers our appreciation throughout the year in a variety of ways, we send this special note of thanks to all of them in this edition of *Write On!*

PGI Steering Committee members: **Christina Basic, Ron Dobrinsky, Marvin Doerksen, Grant Fleming, Bob Goluch,**

Michelle Idzikowski, Anne Lavack, Bob Matthes, Basia Osicki, Ted Paterson, Arne Schellenberg, Kerry Thrasher, Cynthia Selley and Jennifer Singh.

Office volunteers: **Susan Hamilton** (library volunteer for 3 years), **Danielle Smith, Ray Sowa, Connie Lee, Lily Sotomayer, Tara Maltman, Shawna Lehr, Menoti Sharma, Laura Blackwood,** and **Steven Briggs.**

We also thank our Family Literacy Day youth volunteers **Sasha Regehr, Khang Pham,** and **Danielle Koutts,** and Storysacks volunteers **Mariana Boukaillo, Ginny Collins, Kathy Sexsmith** and **Dave Tuan,** all from Miles MacDonnell Collegiate.

And a very special thanks to **Henry Ballon,** our proofreader.

We couldn’t do it without you!



Volunteer Lily Sotomayer with Linda Dubasov

LPM Coin Boxes Filling Up

Eight rural family literacy programs have started collecting donations in the clear acrylic coin boxes supplied to them recently by LPM.

The coin boxes are part of a six-month pilot project developed by LPM to encourage rural family literacy programs to promote themselves in their communities by partnering with local Chamber of Commerce businesses, said **Susanne Magyar-Chapiel** (Outreach Coordinator).

Two insert cards were developed to go into the coin boxes. The first features the new LPM Lifelong Learning logo and infor-

mation that ties in with our current radio ads and billboards. The second card promotes National Family Literacy Day and I Love to Read Month. Each of the coin boxes can be “personalized” with the local family literacy program’s name, address and phone number, Susanne added.

In January, coordinators were encouraged to add some colorful stickers to the Family Literacy Day insert card so that people would notice that it was different from the first LPM card.

“People really responded well to our coin box when we set it out at our Family Lit-

eracy Day event in Flin Flon,” said **Marge Warkentin.** “I tried the box somewhere else before, with not much response, and then surprisingly enough, I got a good response from friends and neighbors when the box was sitting on my kitchen table!”

Coin boxes are now being displayed in Brandon, Selkirk, Gimli, Flin Flon, The Pas, Carmen and Minnedosa. Please contact your local family literacy program coordinators to find out where the coin boxes are located, and remind your friends to lighten their pockets or change purses when they see them!

Learners' Page

Learner Speakers' Bureau *by Lynda Taylor*



The 2001 Learner Speakers' Bureau members are presently being trained at a series of four Saturday workshops. During the first session, new members of the Speakers' Bureau began the writing of their autobiographical speeches under the guidance of **Emily Johnson** from the Salvation Army. Alumni members reworked their speeches, to include the new developments in their lives as a result of their literacy work.

The second session included a presentation from **Marg Rose** on literacy facts and an opportunity to practise speeches and receive feedback. The mentors from the Alumni Speakers' Bureau, **Joe Dutra**, **Dan Deurbrouck** and **Ken Gessell**, were present to offer assistance. Future sessions will include tips on how to improve a speech and how to present a professional image, conducted by **Diane Skelton** of the Toastmasters' Club. As well, the Speakers' Bureau members will be trained on how to speak effectively with the media.

Any school or organization that would like to book a speaker should call **Lynda Taylor** at 291-1270.

Joe Dutra

Joe Dutra is the new Manitoba Learner Representative to MCL (Movement for Canadian Literacy). Joe has been a member of the Learner Speakers' Bureau for two years and is currently a mentor for the program. He is an employee of Kitchencraft, a learner at the Transcona Literacy Centre, and the father of two sons. Having personally conducted intensive research at the Interlake Learners' Conference in Selkirk, and received information from Winnipeg programs and the Northern Learners' Conference in Flin Flon, Joe will effectively convey the views of Manitoba learners when he attends the Learners' Advisory Network meetings in Ottawa. Joe can be reached at LPM at 947-5757.



Important Deadlines

1 May, 2001. NLS deadline for funding applications for projects for 2001-2002. Phone ALCE at 945-8247.

11 May, 2001. Deadline for nominatons for Margaret Laurence Awards. Phone Stevenson-Britannia at 837-3521.

31 May, 2001. Deadline for nominations for Canada Post awards. Visit www.canadapost

Shelley's Story

My name is Shelley Ringrose. I go to the Community Adult Learning Centre every day. I am taking many subjects there. They are reading, writing, spelling, math, grammar, handwriting, beginning drivers's education, and computer.

I decided to continue my education for many reasons. I want to better myself and have a better chance of getting a good job to gain independence and to prove to myself that I can do it. To get my education was, and is, hard now at this age of my life. I have two children, and a husband who relies on me to be there and help him. My husband suffered an accident at work and is in a wheelchair and I do need to help him sometimes.

His support, plus my determination, has let me continue to better myself with a good education. This year, besides finishing my grade 8, I also am taking a course in computers. I need help in the basic operations of computers and their functions.

My plans for the future, I hope will be unlimited, but I would like to work with the public. The only things I foresee that would block my chances of reaching my goal are if something would happen to my husband, or me taking my eyes off the prize and becoming discouraged with myself. I do not intend this to happen at all. I will strive to keep my mind and myself on track to finish this course which I have started. I really want my life to change for the better.

Reflections on becoming a Peer Tutor

Colleen is a peer tutor at the Selkirk Friendship Centre. Thanks Colleen!

When I found out that I could take a course to be a tutor, I was so happy as I think everybody should know how to read and write, and that can make a difference in their lives. I am so happy I could help. I love helping people. The look on their face when they know a word or sentence is the biggest reward anyone can have. My own education is not that great. If I can use what I know to help someone else, that makes me feel good.

Colleen Miller

Grammatically Speaking about Commas

with Charles Moody

On my recent visit to Computype, **Thor Halgren**, the printer of this newsletter, a man who goes beyond the call of duty to ensure the quality of his work and the satisfaction of his customers, posed an interesting question about the comma, that humble but important punctuation mark that is probably misused more than any other. He raised the question of the need for a comma before the “and” after the second last item in a list. “Do we need one or not,” he asked, “after *Dick*, in *Tom, Dick and Harry*?”

Well, I gave him my opinion (and I’ll share it with you later), and that got me thinking about the importance of punctuation in general and the comma in particular. I offer you my thoughts on the comma and its misuse. The comma can be discussed at great length, or very briefly. Rules are many or few. The following three will cover almost every eventuality.

Rule One: Use Commas to set off Interrupters

Any words not essential to an understanding of the sentence can be set off with commas. Here are some examples:

- He spoke to his students
- *After a few moments of silence*, he spoke to his students.
- He spoke, *with some hesitation*, to his students.
- *Furthermore*, he spoke to his students.
- He spoke to his students, *raising his voice slightly*.

It is helpful to remember that commas almost always go in pairs, or they *will* unless the interrupter is at the beginning or the end of the statement, making one of them unnecessary. Let’s look at two very common misuses of the comma and apply this rule.

Dates and Addresses

Very often the second comma is omitted in dates or addresses. “*In November, 1986 I moved from Brandon, Manitoba to Swift Current, Saskatchewan.*” Wrong! Read the sentence, pausing only at the commas. See how it’s important to put commas after *1986* and *Manitoba* to break the links with the words that follow. Or simply follow Rule One: *1986* and *Manitoba* and *Sakatchewan* are interrupters in the sentence “*In November I*

moved from Brandon to Swift Current, and must, therefore, be set off with commas.

e.g. and i.e. and etc.

It helps to know what the abbreviations stand for and then you’ll punctuate them correctly: *e.g.* stands for the latin *exempli gratia*, which means “for the sake of example”, and *i.e.* stands for the latin *id est* which means “that is”. Each of the letters in *e.g.* and *i.e.* is followed by a period to indicate the abbreviation, and each of the the abbreviations will be preceded and followed by a comma, since they “interrupt” the main thought in the sentence.

Here are two examples.

Many of our words, e.g., aquifer, come from latin.

I am an entomologist, i.e., a person who studies insects.

If you say to yourself “for example” and “that is” as you read the abbreviations, then you’ll hear how the expressions interrupt the main flow of the sentence, and punctuate them correctly.

Etc. is another common latin abbreviation. It stands for *et cetera*, meaning “and other things”. As an abbreviation, it is followed by a period. As an interrupter, in the middle of a sentence, it will be set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Spiders, flies, beetles, etc., covered the floor. (MS Word spellcheck doesn’t agree with me on the final comma, but I’m sure you have your own disagreements with MS Word.)

Now it’s time to tackle Thor’s question.

Rule Two: Use commas to separate items in a List.

This is straightforward enough. The only question is whether to put a comma after the second-last item in the list, before the “and”. Consider these examples:

- He spoke to Tom, Dick and Harry.
- I ordered coffee, juice, bacon and eggs.
- I bought coffee, juice, bacon, and eggs.
- I invited Bill, Ed, Tom, and Ann to the party.
- I invited Bill, Ed, Tom and Ann to the party.

Why do some of the above sentences have commas before the “and”, and others not? This brings us to Rule Three.

Rule Three: Use a comma where necessary, for clarity

This was the answer I gave to Thor. Without the optional comma, the last two items in a list may group themselves together as a single entity, as in the second example. For that reason, I always put in the extra comma to ensure the separation of the last two items, unless, as in the case of *Tom, Dick and Harry*, they clearly remain distinct.

A Reader Writes

Elma Gerwin of LiteracyWORKS (See page 19) wins our prize for correctly using a gerund and a participle in the Winnipeg Goldeyes notice. She also draws our attention to a subject-verb agreement error in our last issue.

To correct the first sentence by using a gerund, one would write, “For the safety of your children, Winnipeg Goldeyes Baseball Club would appreciate **your remaining** in the playground area while your child plays.” As for the second, one could use “The Winnipeg Goldeyes Baseball Club is not responsible for injuries sustained **by children while playing**”, or, better yet, “**injuries sustained by children while they are playing**.” (Or perhaps “**injuries sustained by anyone**”, since presumably parents could be injured as well. And there’s a sentence fragment for you.)

On the page which faces your column in Write On!, there is an article titled “Literacy Expert in Winnipeg”. The last sentence reads “A copy of his remarks were posted on . . .etc.” This lack of subject-verb agreement is becoming increasingly prevalent - you hear it constantly on the CBC, and read it in respected newspapers. Unfortunately, teaching the rule “The subject of a verb is never in a prepositional phrase” is difficult when almost no one knows how to identify even a preposition.

Oops! I must take responsibility for letting that one slip by. Most of the time we can rely on the ear to pick up errors, but in this case, happy to hear the plural noun “remarks” next to the plural verb “were”, the ear deceived us. Thanks, Elma.

LPM launches Million Dollar Endowment Fund



L to r: Larry McIntosh, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce; Ron Koslowski, Palliser Furniture; Louise Smith, Assante Asset Management Inc; Education Minister Drew Caldwell; Joe Dutra, Learner Speaker; Marg Rose, LPM Executive Director; Karen Milani, North West Company; Ken Burfoot, HRDC.

On February 8, Literacy Partners of Manitoba launched their feasibility campaign to test interest in raising \$1 million for literacy. More than 80 business leaders and government officials attended the event at the Chamber of Commerce hall in the Grain Exchange building in Winnipeg.

In his introductory remarks, master of ceremonies **Larry MacIntosh**, CEO of Peak of the Market, discussed the importance of literacy to an effective economic strategy: "It moves Manitoba towards its economic potential while ensuring that no one is left behind."

Ron Koslowski highlighted some of the features of the workplace literacy program at Palliser Furniture.

Adult learner **Joe Dutra** spoke of being handicapped in his employment due to low literacy skills. Unable to read a bedtime story to his children, he turned for help to the Transcona Literacy Centre. His improvement showed.

Karen Milani, Vice-President of Human Resources, outlined the Northwest Company's commitment to training and hiring people from the north. Not only was it good for

community relations, she said, but it made good economic sense to train local people for store management positions. Determining their employees' literacy skills, then raising their literacy levels, was an essential part of this process.

Education Minister **Drew Caldwell** emphasized that the demands of the workplace of the 21st Century required greater literacy skills than ever before.

In explaining why the Assante Asset Management Corporation was committed to literacy, Vice President (Corporate Strategy) **Louise Smith** reminded us of the startling statistic: "Children of literate, employed adults are five times more likely to graduate high school than children of adults with low literacy."

Executive Director of LPM, **Marg Rose**, outlined some ideas for raising the literacy levels of the more than 100,000 adults who are not enrolled in programs. She urged the business people to invest in the future of their province: "It's only a buck a Manitoban, folks! I know we can do it!" For further details, visit *Social Marketing* at www.mb.literacy.ca

Valued Sponsors

We could not hold many of our literacy events without the generous support of local businesses. LPM thanks the sponsors below who have supported adult or family literacy in recent months.

- **Red River Cooperative**, Winnipeg
- **Kitchen Craft**, Winnipeg
- **Ducks Unlimited**, Winnipeg
- **Beaver Lumber**, Flin Flon
- **Candy Bar Baskets and Balloons**, Flin Flon
- **CFAR**, Flin Flon
- **Marlene Anderson, Discovery Toys**, Flin Flon
- **Lori Sealey, Doodle Bugs Book Nook**, Flin Flon
- **Gretta Redahl, Flin Flon Public Library**, Flin Flon
- **Bonnie Schiltroth, Jocus Toys**, Flin Flon
- **Johnny's Confectionary**, Flin Flon
- **North of 53 Consumer's Co-op**, Flin Flon
- **Judy Pettersen, Pettersen Infant Products**, Flin Flon
- **Pharmasave**, Flin Flon
- **The Reminder**, Flin Flon
- **Saan Store**, Flin Flon
- **Skeavington Family**, Flin Flon
- **Super Thrifty Drug Mart**, Flin Flon
- **Lesley Pabianek, Usborne Books**, Flin Flon
- **Flin Flon Rotary Club**
- **Minnedosa Rotary Club**

LPM Bursary Report

In the current fiscal year, from September 1, 2000, to 15 March, 2001, Literacy Partners of Manitoba Bursary Fund has given away \$7245.10. Of these monies, \$2150 was awarded to cover child care expenses, \$3228.10 was awarded to cover transportation expenses, \$1395 was awarded to cover supplies, \$222 was awarded to cover other expenses like fees and glasses and \$250 was given to cover program cheque handling costs. All but two of these bursaries were given to rural learners. There is still money available for learner bursaries. Contact Joyce at 947-5757 for further details.

Building the Vision for Literacy: Plans of Action



June McMullen, Barbara Wynes, Carole Didyk

Literacy Partners of Manitoba called a meeting on March 5th to follow up developments from the November Conference, "Building the Vision for 2000 Plus". Previous participants and other regional representatives were invited to attend.

Current Developments

Participants commented on some significant changes taking place in the adult and family literacy field.

- Family Literacy is expanding beyond ALCE funding. It is important to keep track of the many developments in family literacy (contacts, training, new funders). A strong family literacy voice is needed to speak across departments.
- The whole adult learning centre funding formula has changed from a per student grant to program funding. A statement of policy and new evaluation methods have been drafted by the new Community Learning and Youth branch. ALC applications must include a business plan. Partnerships with literacy groups for credit courses (Stages) are encouraged. No ALC money will be available for non-credit courses. Some learners may prefer non-institutional environment. However, one participant spoke of her vision of a one-stop shop for all adult learning needs.
- Many questions were posed by rural and urban literacy practitioners. How will literacy programs co-exist with Adult Learning Centres (ALCs)? Will existing relationships with the community and school divisions be affected? Learners may be drawn away from literacy programs, yet 40% of learners have personal, not academic goals. Will Literacy

instructors be obliged to have formal credentials? Can the Stage 3 Literacy Instructor's Certificate be recognized like the Vocational Education qualification? How can literacy practitioners use the Prior Learning Assessment to gain formal recognition, especially in the light of the teacher shortage?

- Tom Glenwright spoke of a common literacy curriculum based on the Pembina Valley Essential Skills model. He mentioned the possibility of literacy programs partnering with ALCs to offer more credentials for learners.
- A new national Family Literacy foundational training manual will be available in 2002. Judy Baker is collaborating on a chapter on Administration
- A pilot project allowing learners to get credit towards their Mature High School Diploma for literacy work is being investigated in Dauphin.
- Pathways pilot project in Brandon is exploring the curricular links between literacy programs, ALCs, colleges and universities.



The "Organization" sub-committee at work

Action Plans

Participants then discussed some of the important current issues and split up into groups to formulate action plans in each of the areas of priority.

Funding

- Carry out research project to measure the success of community-based literacy programs.
- Investigate whether literacy programs can accept funds from First Nations in support of their learners
- Establish central database of sources of outside funds (funding broker)

Materials and Programs

- Create Family Literacy database on who's

doing what and with whom

- Organize a Family Literacy Conference
- Revamp Family Literacy resources by type of program
- Respond to the need for more materials on low-level literacy independent work
- Determine the needs of seniors through focus groups and literature review
- Explain to the field the meaning and use of the Stages I-IV curriculum as potential credit courses at ALC's
- Invite ALCs to share School Initiated Courses and School and Student Initiated Projects with diverse cultural content
- Develop exit inventory for learners

Technology

- Set up shipping subsidy of software preview (CDs technical aids, videos)
- Fund .25 tech support available to programs in each region
- Fund upgrading of donated computers
- Buy software in bulk and share legacy and co-op software
- Increase practitioners' comfort level with Access Database, email, PDF files

Benefits and Working Conditions

- Conduct feasibility study of affordable group benefits plan for literacy workers
- Develop plan to show need for equity of facilities, salaries, cost of living, etc., with MTS, ASEC members

Organization

- Strengthen partnerships between literacy programs and ALCs (each becoming familiar with what happens at other level)
- Train field in literacy awareness workshops to educate partnering agencies and other stakeholders (Justice, Health, Agriculture, Social Services).



Judy Baker, Terrie Moar and Kate Roth

Literacy News in Brief

Rotary Supports PULSE Winter Blitz Event in Minnedosa



Minnedosa Rotary Club representative, John Neabel, and Michelle Boyd of PULSE

At the Winter Blitz family literacy event in Minnedosa on January 25th, Minnedosa Rotary Club representative, **John Neabel**, presented **Michelle Boyd**, PULSE Literacy Working Group Chairperson, with a cheque for \$350.00. Winter Blitz was organized as a promotional event to create further awareness of Family Literacy Day. **Pat Bowslaugh**, entertaining guest speaker and recent author of "Message to My Baby", informed the audience of the important role parents and caregivers play in providing a stimulating and supportive environment while raising their preschool and school age children. The audience was treated to musical entertainment which included a Celtic Dance ensemble. Family members of all ages enjoyed participating in a Chinese auction. PULSE (Program Using Lifelong Skills in Education) greatly appreciates the Minnedosa Rotary Club's continuing in-kind donation of time to the Board as well as its yearly financial commitment to the combined adult and family literacy program in the Minnedosa area. Thanks, Rotary!

Read to Me Expands in Flin Flon

Read to Me, a family literacy program developed in Flin Flon in 1995 by Marge Warkentin, is opening, for the first time, a third session for the year. The main goals of the program are to encourage families to establish reading as a valued activity within

their home, and to have fun learning together. One participant recently wrote, "I now take a very active role in reading to my daughter and love it! This was a wonderful thing for us to do." Over the years the program has grown; more and more families of preschoolers are interested in becoming involved. Because of this demand, Marge Warkentin, Coordinator of "Read to Me", will be offering a third eight-week session to the community. If you would like more information about the "Read to Me" program, phone Marge at (204) 687-7794

McNally's Offers Discount

McNally Robinson Booksellers recently announced a **20% discount** on books purchased for Literacy Partners of Manitoba programs. This discount must be requested at the time of purchase and the books must be left at the store. Life skills books, dictionaries and thesauruses for adult learners, as well as good quality fiction and non-fiction Canadian children's books, would all be appreciated. McNally's Grant Park location also has an LPM coin box on display at their main floor cash desk.

New Director of Community and Youth Programs



Tom Glenwright

Tom Glenwright has been appointed Director of Community Learning and Youth programs. Tom was the recipient of the Manitoba governments Service Excellence Award in the category of Leadership in 2000.

New Manager of ALCE



Anna Beauchamp

Anna Beauchamp has taken up an appointment as Manager of Adult Literacy and Continuing Education. She comes to the post from the Collegiate at the University of Winnipeg, where she taught English for many years before becoming Associate Dean. At the Collegiate, she has been particularly involved in various initiatives concerning mature students. Welcome, Anna, to your new position.

Manitoba Book Week

Book lovers will have the opportunity to support literacy while supporting Manitoba's vibrant publishing industry during the fourth annual Manitoba Book Week (April 22 to 28, 2001). Save 20% off select Manitoba titles at participating stores across the province between April 17 and 28, and the members of the Association of Manitoba Book Publishers will donate \$1.00 per book sold to the Literacy Partners of Manitoba.

Participating Winnipeg bookstores include McNally Robinson (Grant Park and Portage Place) and the University of Manitoba Bookstore. Participating rural bookstores include Friesens Stationery and Books (Altona), Judith's Books (St. Malo), Just Books (Portage la Prairie), Paperwork (Morden and Winkler), and Tergesen's General Store (Gimli).

For more information contact Michelle Peters, Manitoba Book Week Coordinator, by phone at (204) 947-3335.

Literacy News in Brief

Tap In

Looking for a way to build and enhance skills? Committed to lifelong learning? Consider the Tap-In Program.

If you work for a non-profit organization in a paid or volunteer position, you are eligible to participate in Tap-In, a Winnipeg based program which makes surplus corporate training seats available to clients, staff and volunteers of non-profit organizations and agencies.

Participants are able to take training free-of-charge or at a cost-recovery/low cost rate on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Applicants/participants or their sponsoring agencies are only responsible for the cost of texts, manuals, etc. The training tuition fee is waived.

Since these are surplus seats, you must be able to accommodate a flexible schedule as the extra seats are usually not identified until the last minute.

Examples of recent opportunities include Word 97 Intermediate, Windows 98 Intro, Word 2000 Level 2, Excel 97 Intro, and Excel 2000 Intro.

TAP-IN has also enjoyed a 50 per cent success rate of gaining access to seats at the continuing education divisions of the secondary and post-secondary institutions affiliated with the program.

To get your name on the mailing (email or fax) list for the weekly posting of training opportunities or if you want more information about the program, contact **Gary Sherbain** at: The TAP-IN Program (A CAHRD Affiliate), 4308 Eldridge Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3R 0L7. Phone (204)889-5218 Toll-free: 1-866-833-5414, Fax (204)888-3140 Email: wahsa@escape.ca

New Director of NLS

Lianne Vardy had recently been appointed Director of the National Literacy Secretariat, replacing **Christine Dodge**. Previously, she had worked in Health Canada. On coming to HRDC she said she was "excited at the prospect of working with so many dedicated individuals, non-governmental organizations, governments, business and labour as we continue the work of advancing literacy in Canada."

Literacy Works at LiteracyWORKS (WVRA)



Staff and students of LiteracyWORKS from left to right: Tutor Jin-Hee Park, Clerical Support Barb Rielle, Bud W.F., Coordinator Elma Gerwin, Program Manager Shirley Stone, Cliff Gose and Glenda Prince.

What's in a name? Everything, according to **Ron Koskie**, former fund-raising chairperson of that venerable institution formerly known as Winnipeg Volunteer Reading Aides or WVRA.

Ron maintains that the former name is too long, and that most people had trouble spelling it anyway. "Besides, he said, "it doesn't reflect our activities. People often think we are readers to the blind, for example."

Effective immediately, WVRA is to be known as **LiteracyWORKS**. "We chose the name," said **Elma Gerwin**, Program Coordinator, "because it was short, pithy, and, we hope, easy to remember and spell. One of our board members described it as a 'now' name - i.e., it has a 21st century look to it. Our students, especially, had a great deal of trouble with WVRA, even as an acronym."

WVRA began in 1978, in response to a need for an adult literacy program to help the city's then estimated 70,000 adult non-readers. The first of its kind in the city, it continues to be the program with the greatest

number of volunteer participants. Approximately 45 volunteers tutor adults in basic literacy skills on a one-to-one basis.

LiteracyWORKS presently caters primarily to lower-level learners, and especially those with learning disabilities. It offers individualized assessments of each student, one-on-one help, and this year has a grant to run "Project Streamline". This project offers short-term help to clients with specific goals such as resumes, driver's licences, application forms, job-related manuals, etc., and also computer basics. In addition, it is piloting the use of STAPLE, a computer-based training program for tutors.

"Until the public gets used to our new name, we'll run with a double-barrelled identity, said Elma, "on the phone and in the directory: 'LiteracyWORKS - WVRA. Adult Learning Program.'" Note their new email address as well: litworks@videon.wave.ca

LiteracyWORKS plans to celebrate its new identity, and to honour its volunteers at the same time, at an event, soon to be announced, in May. Congratulations and best wishes!

Upcoming Events

16-26 April Manitoba Book Week. LPM will receive \$1.00 from the sale of featured new Manitoba titles, with cooperating bookstores(See page 18) Sponsored by the Association of Manitoba Book Publishers.

19-20 April, 2001. West Region Learners' Conference, Portage la Prairie. Call Alanna Hillis at 727-6017 or 727-2007 for more information.

April 22-28: Volunteer Week in Canada. Various activities honour unpaid workers who contribute to literacy and LWGs and so much more in the charitable sector.

27 April, 2001, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Beyond the Classroom - Lifelong Literacy. ALCE workshop at Centennial Library, 251 Donald Street, Winnipeg. Instructors, Regina Ramos-Urbano, Barbara Wynes, and Library Staff.

1 May, 2001. National Literacy Secretariat deadline for funding applications for projects for 2001-2002. Call ALCE for application forms: 945-8247.

2 May, 2001, 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Reach for Your Dreams II Learners' Conference. William and Catherine Booth College, 447 Webb Place, Winnipeg. Open to literacy students from Winnipeg and surrounding areas, this conference offers a choice of 12 workshops including Concentration & Study Tips, Substance Abuse, Improving Self-Confidence and Putting Things Off Until Later - How Do I Stop, Stress Management, Budgeting Money, Getting Along With Others, First Aid Tips, and more. Great Door prizes, Lunch at no charge for learners. For further information, please contact Karen at 224-9099.

31 May, 2001. Deadline for nominations for the 2001 Canada Post Literacy Awards. Nominate an individual or organization for an award for their exceptional work in one of four categories: Individual Literacy Achievement, Educator, Community Leadership and Business Leadership. Visit www.canadapost.ca for further information

4-5 June, 2001. 10:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. Parent–Child Mother Goose Program Teacher Certification. St Johns Library, 500 Salter Street, Winnipeg. Phone Bookmates at 582-1804

13-14 June, 2001. 10:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. Bookmates Rock and Read Facilitator Certification Training. St John's Library, 500 Salter Street, Winnipeg. Phone 582-1804.

22 June, 2001. Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament. Elmhurst Golf and Country Club. Call Jasmin at 947-5757.

23 July – 3 August, 2000. Summer Literacy Institute offered by Literacy BC at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby Campus. For further information, phone 604 684-8520 or email jasmussen@thehub.capcollege.bc.ca

8 September: World Literacy Day and Margaret Laurence Awards. Call staff at Stevenson Britannia Literacy Program (837-3521) for nomination information for this year's Margaret Laurence volunteer awards to be held in Winnipeg.

13 September, 2001. Chip in for Literacy Family Fun Day at the Short Game Golf Training Centre, in cooperation with Winnipeg–St. James Rotary Club and the Stevenson Britannia Literacy Program.



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Write On! Is a publication of Literacy Partners of Manitoba circulated to members, funders, sponsors, and the public upon request. The goal is to encourage and support learners, tutors, instructors and programs in Manitoba by building and sustaining ongoing conversation and exchange of ideas and information among members, the literacy community and the public at large.

The views of contributors do not necessarily express the position or policies of Literacy Partners of Manitoba or its Board of Directors. **Contributions welcome.**

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