



STILL DREAMING

a year of learning
with HCLN

HCLN 
Halifax Community Learning Network
"a bridge to a brighter future"

This book is dedicated to the memory of Chris Conlan, a former tutor with the Halifax North Public Library Literacy Program- and to all of those who volunteer their time to help others.

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Mrs. Burton

BY IAN WISEMAN

Still sunny at sixty, she laughs
down by the government wharf-
a daisy nests behind one ear,
a terrier sniffs her naked shin.
Embracing a man's quiet hand,
linked and fused, husband and wife,
she views his face, his engraved husk.
He scans the horizon, then the surf.

Her face can soften into dough.
I've seen the tears through pleated veil.
They buried young her youngest son,
a boy with deference, discipline,
a friend of mine, a teammate, too,
whose midfield play had satin style.
A winter death, leukemia.

She cannot read or write as such,
She mocks the sound of words I know
-wisdom, benevolence, élan-
and (here's the lie of literacy)
in none of these am I her match.

This book was made possible through the work and generosity of many, with special thanks to:

Laura Channon, Rachel Lebowitz and Linda Oakley, the Coordinators who inspire our students to keep on writing. The volunteers and learners of the Halifax Community Learning Network who continue to make amazing things happen.

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Congratulations to the following volunteers, who have been involved with the Halifax Community Learning Network for more than five years:

Gordon Barnes

Daureen Stover

Sandra Blank

Margie-Naish Buchanan

Tricia Murray

Tom Forsyth

Gail Ellsworth

Patricia Padmos

As Network Coordinator, I am reminded every day of the commitment shown by those involved with the Halifax Community Learning Network- from the volunteers who tutor or participate in the HCLN Board, to the Program Coordinators who work tirelessly to support and educate our students and most of all, the students themselves: who often juggle the pressures of work and family and still find time to pursue their dream of upgrading their skills.

Their goals are varied, but everyone who comes to study at HCLN has one thing in common: the courage to seek help and work toward improving their level of literacy. As some of these stories show, many of those who come



Network Coordinator Denise Morley presents Sandra Blank with her certificate of recognition for more than five years of service as a literacy tutor during a National Volunteer Week celebration at the Keshen Goodman Library.

to HCLN have overcome huge barriers including the challenges of being a new Canadian, economic difficulties, or learning disabilities that made formal learning difficult. From those who are struggling to read their first paragraph or write a letter for the first time, to those who wish to achieve their GED or High School Diploma for Adults, you inspire me with your commitment to life long learning.

Congratulations to everyone who was written a poem or story for Still Dreaming: a year of learning with the Halifax Community Learning Network. I wish you all the best in your learning goals and reaching your dreams!

Denise Morley

A special thank you and congratulations to Margie Naish-Buchanan, the HCLN treasurer who was recently honored with an HRM Volunteer Recognition Award. Margie has been a volunteer with the HCLN for more than 10 years—a true friend of literacy, and has the task of keeping our finances in order. Well done, Margie!



HCLN volunteer Margie Naish-Buchanan receiving her HRM Volunteer Recognition Award from Mayor; Peter Kelly

Every year, I learn from the participants in these programs. The courage, dedication and hard work that the learners demonstrate is inspiring and the kindness and support they show to each other is remarkable. They remind me what I too often forget: how important these qualities are for us all. I am proud of all the learners in the two programs: not just for their achievements in reading, writing, and math, but for the extra effort they take in making us all feel comfortable and welcome.

All of the learners have improved throughout the



Program Coordinator Rachel Lebowitz at the National Volunteer Week party at the Spring Garden Road Library

year. Some have gone on to full-time classes or the portfolio program and two are almost ready to write the GED. One learner wrote longer pieces than she ever had before; another wrote a fictional story for the first time in his life. One learner has gained a real understanding of word problems. Another told me that she helped a customer read a greeting card, something she would never have done a year ago. I know that sometimes there are hard days and it can be difficult not to get discouraged, but I want you to know that everyday I see real improvements. You are an inspiration for us all. Thank you!

Thanks too to the tutors, without whom we wouldn't have a program! Your patience, creativity, great sense of humour, and hard work are much appreciated. Thanks for helping make this program so much fun! I hope we will see you again next year.

Lastly, thanks to the Friday gang at HN and Irene-Ann at Spring Garden for keeping me (uh, I mean us) replenished with cookies!

Have a wonderful summer! I look forward to seeing you next year!

Rachel Lebowitz

I have been working with the Bloomfield Literacy Program for six years, and although each year brings new rewards and challenges, I am always impressed with the progress made by my students. While some are working on basic reading and writing, others are studying to write their GED exam or to improve their employment skills. As you can see by their stories, some of my students have overcome a great deal to attend upgrading classes. I hope you all have a great summer and look forward to working together again in September!



*Bloomfield Literacy Program Coordinator
Laura Channon at work*

Laura Channon



Program Coordinator Linda Oakley with students and volunteers at the Winter Party at the captain William Spry Library

Goodman Public Library and my second year at the Captain William Spry Public Library. A Coordinator does many different tasks and meets many people over the course of a year. Thus my job is never boring but always interesting!

There are many people besides myself that help make the upgrading program run successfully throughout the year. The library and the library staff provide us with a comfortable and welcoming space to have our sessions in every week and the staff are always eager to help us when needed. The Halifax Community Learning Network and Network Coordinator Denise Morley offer resources, knowledge and support. Then we have the people who make up our programs- the tutors and learners. They are an enthusiastic group who inspire me on a daily basis.

To all of you, thanks for another great year! I hope you all have an enjoyable and safe summer!

Linda Oakley

Congratulations to the following HCLN tutors who completed the NS Department of Education Tutor & Instructor Training Course with instructor Allan Banks:

Devon Code-McNeil, Chris Vosey, Elaine Frampton, Bev Oulton, Sandy Potter,

I just celebrated my fifth anniversary working and volunteering in adult literacy. My involvement with literacy has been challenging but very rewarding. I, personally, have learned from all the students and tutors I have met during the last five years.

This is my third year as Coordinator at the Keshen

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Tutor Training instructor Allan Banks with HCLN tutor Etta Hamm

Richard Schmalz, Elizabeth Miner, Sharon MacKinnon, Laura Kinderman,
Etta Hamm and Jenelle Gregg

My Long Walk to Freedom

BY ABABA AYELE

I was born in Davat, a village in Ethiopia, in 1964. My family's vegetable and fruit farm provided well for our large family. My father and brothers still operate the farm there.

I married Jallo at the age of 13 and we moved to the city of Gondar. Jallo worked for the Red Cross as an interpreter between English-speaking foreign aid workers, and staff and clients of local agencies. The language spoken there is Amharic, one of many Ethiopian languages. We had three boys and a girl. I ran my own busy cafeteria. Life in Gondar was great for us for thirteen years.

Then Major Mengistu, a dictator government leader, came into power. His soldiers tried to force Jallo and Atakalti, our 12-year old son, to join the army. It was a cruel army run by a terrible government. You had no choice in anything. Many who tried to escape were caught and forced to join. Many were killed.

Jallo and I decided to take our chances. Late one night we started on a long walk to the Sudan, leaving all our clothes and belongings behind. It was risky, but we had to go.

Jallo carried Bitow, our 4-year old son on his back. I carried Fantanish, our 2-year old daughter. Atakalti and his brother Mulu, 10, were big enough to walk. We walked for one week toward the Sudan border where we would be free.

So that military security would not catch us and put Jallo and Atakalti in the army, and send me and the smaller kids home, we walked only at night. Through forests, bushes, fields and hills. The children and I hid and slept under trees in the daytime, resting from walking all night. Jallo never slept at all, the whole week, always watching out for Mengistu's soldiers, thieves, and hyenas, wild dogs that will eat anything.

We carried no money because soldiers or thieves would have taken it from us

anyway. Some people were killed for their money. I carried bits of dry food to keep us going, and Jallo carried a big bottle of water, besides carrying Bitow.

We got very, very tired, walking so far. We felt we could not take another step, but Jallo kept us going, almost 300 miles. Finally, worn out and with no money, we reached the Sudan border.

There we met a bus driver named Jamal-Abdu. We told him how far we had come. We were a terrible sight and he felt sorry for us, so he let us on his bus. The bus took us many miles on country roads, and several towns where we stayed overnight. Jamal-Abdu's employer paid for him to sleep in hotels and he let us sleep in the bus. He bought us food and drink. Jamal-Abdu lived in the big city Port Sudan, so that is where he took us.

Jamal-Abdu and his wife, Fatima, kept us in their home two months. They gave us shelter, food, and clothes. They were the answer to our prayers. Then we got our own place to live.

We lived there for five years. I got a job working for a family, and Jallo kept working for the Red Cross. Jallo's life on the job with professionals during the day was ok, but city life was hard.

The people of Port Sudan, mostly Muslims, don't like Christians, and they don't like refugees. People laughed at our clothes, insulted us on the street, and treated us badly in many ways. Atakalti and Mulu were bullied at school every day. The teachers didn't supervise the kids. They didn't care what happened to refugees. There was no future there for us at all.

In Port Sudan two years, we applied to come to Canada. We were finally approved after three years of waiting, living that hard life every day.

We came directly to Halifax seven years ago. The Canadian government paid our air fare and we had to pay it back. MISA got us a place to live and helped us to get settled. It was great to be with friendly people. Life here is good. We feel welcome here. I thank God to be living in this free country. I thank my tutor for helping me tell my story. I have many more to tell.

Class Haikus – November 2004

Halifax North Public Library Communications class

Driving late at night
A yellow line disappears
I was right ticked off

In Ahern Manor
A drunken bum pounds the door
I phoned the police

I saw an old man
Cruising down Forest Hill Park
On a mountain bike

He rode past tracks, trails, and fields
On his small, grey bike
Attached to a lawn mower

“The Goonies”

BY ANN DARVILLE

I watched a video last night. It was a mystery/action film. The name of the movie was “The Goonies.”

The main characters were a group of kids who were searching for a treasure. There were also adults who were following the kids to the treasure.

The movie starts when two boys find a treasure map in their home. The map describes a pirate ship with a treasure inside the ship. The boys decide to go on a treasure hunt. The treasure hunt starts at a scary old house. Under the house there are tunnels, waterfalls and a pirate ship. The adults (an old woman, her son, an escaped convict and a friend of the old woman) are following the kids.

The old woman knew about the treasure hunt. The adults wanted the treasure for themselves. The adults followed the kids because the kids had the map.

The map showed the kids where to go inside the old house. The kids followed tunnels under the house. The treasure ship was in the tunnels under the old house.

The ship was surrounded by water. The kids had to swim to get to the ship. When the kids get on the ship they find a treasure (gold, coins and jewels). The old woman's son helped the kids find the treasure and stops the adults from taking the treasure.

At the end of the movie the police capture the old woman, the con and the old woman's friend. The kids get a reward for helping capture the con.

One of the boys gets some of the jewels for himself. He uses the jewels to save his parents house from being destroyed.

I liked this movie because it was a good mystery. It was never boring and made me think a lot.

The Bull

BY GRACE MCGREGOR

I grew up in New Ross with my six sisters and three brothers. Sometimes my family was hungry, so us kids, me and my sisters and brothers, went looking for apples that fell on the ground from the trees in a field. The field belonged to Roscoe Porter. Roscoe had cows and a bull. The bull was in that field all summer.



HCLN student Grace with tutor, Etta

We had to go through a barbed wire fence to get into the field where the bull was. Sometimes we ripped our clothes on the barbs on the fence.

Once we got in there, we were afraid of the bull. Bulls will chase you and throw you up in the air with their horns. They are very angry, crazy animals. A bull can kill you. We were so scared but we needed those apples. The bull chased us lots of times but when you're young, you can run so fast. We had to pass him to go swimming too. Boy, that bull sure made life hard for us. It

was us against him.

We were scared but when you're a kid you don't think about dying. When I think back now, I'd never go back in that field with that bull in there. I can't believe we lived in all that danger. But I look back now and I have to laugh. I wonder what ever happened to that bull in the end.

The Four Seasons

JOHN ALLAN MACMILLAN

Spring is like a new born baby
Washed and powdered
Like new flowers coming out
Summer is like a sunny day
Sunday arrives and it's to the beach.
Fall is when the leaves on the trees turn
Red, green, yellow and orange before they fall down.
Winter is lovely when sun shines
Or when you're on a trail.

The Dart Team

BY A.M.

I belong to a dart league. There are four teams with four players, and each team has a Captain. There are five or six spare players to fill in when someone is not available. We play once a week, with three games per night. Each team starts with 501 points, and counts down to zero. You must hit a double to begin scoring, and also to win.

I started playing last September for the first time. I was a spare for the first half of the season. I was asked to join a team full-time after Christmas. The people are friendly, and it is an enjoyable experience.

The league finishes in May, and starts again in September. I am looking forward to being on the team again next year, with God's blessing.

“Me”

BY SPRYOS ANGELOPOULOS

My name is Spyros. I would like to share my favorite sporting events with you.

I take part in the Special Olympics program. I like to go swimming, bowling, and track. My favorite is running and diving.

I also have an older brother that just got married. His name is Alex. I also have a kitten named “Coy”, he is a gentle kitty that eats out of my hand. I love Coy.

Do Yourself A Favour

BY KATHY DOBSON

There are many people in the world who have problems reading. Some people say they’re too old to learn to read. Some people say they don’t have the time. Some people worry that they’re not smart enough to learn to read. Some people are embarrassed that they can’t read well.



*HCLN student Kathy Dobson with tutor
Patricia Padmos*

I read the article on Sonya Moore. I like the story but she should have told her sons that she couldn’t read. Instead she told her employment counsellor. If she had told her sons they would probably help her or give her a book and sit beside her to help her read. I think they would try to help her and not turn her away. People should not be embarrassed to let people know that they can’t read. Sonya was embarrassed to let anyone know that she could not read but she blurted it out while she was talking to the counsellor. She could have saved time if she got help reading sooner. Then, she could have helped her sons with their homework. I am happy that Sonya got the help she needed from her counsellor.

She finally told her sons and instead of getting angry they hugged her and she felt so much better. She finally got the confidence to start working on learning to read.

So it is really important to take the first step. Tell a friend or counsellor that you are having trouble reading or writing. You will have more confidence in yourself if you make this start. So do yourself a favor. Take the first step in learning to read. If you learn to read the world opens to you.

My name is Kathy Dobson. I was born in Halifax. I have lived here my whole life. Because I had polio as a child and I was in the hospital for three years, I missed a lot of school as a child then I never really got going in a proper school program. I somehow learned to read and write but I didn't go very far in school. I started coming to the Halifax North library program in 1994. Since then I have learned to write stories, read whole books, do multiplication and division and many other things.

Satisfying Times

BY ETTA HAMM

Becoming a volunteer tutor with the Halifax Community Learning Network is the best thing I've ever done! I love it so much that I'm helping not one, but two learners.

The highlights of my week are Wednesday mornings with Ababa and Friday mornings with Grace. They're so enthusiastic about learning! They triumph in mastering "the hard parts" and in understanding what they're learning. They have aha! moments. They seriously apply themselves to making progress toward their goals, and are seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

They're crafting stories about their lives and appreciating the value and the beauty of clear, effective communication. They're enjoying a variety of approaches to learning, discovering that learning can be fun – and they're eager for more, more, more!

This may not be every tutor's experience – maybe I was just lucky in being matched with Grace and Ababa.

We have such wonderful, satisfying times working together – and we do take the time to chat and laugh! Now, why wouldn't I love it?

My Learning

CLARENCE DOUCETTE

Spring Garden Road Library Program

I am one of the participants in this program. I have been coming here for about four years. These are some of the subjects I have learned while in the program:

Reading. My reading was poor when I started. Math. I have worked on exercises encompassing adding, subtraction, multiplication and long division.

Writing. My writing used to be jammed together and people could not understand it. Now the words are spaced apart so that people can read it.

Spelling. I could not spell very well. I can now sound out syllables to spell words.

Computers. I couldn't understand how to work the computer but now I know a lot more. For example, this story was written on the computer.

Grammar. My grammar was poor but now it has greatly improved.

Navigation. I used to get lost frequently but now I can find my way around most of the time.

I have greatly improved in these subjects over time.

My First Year

BY CYNTHIA MACNEIL

Spring Garden Road Library

My name is Cynthia MacNeil. This is my first year with the literacy program at the library. I come to the Spring Garden Road Library on Tuesdays. I heard about the program from Clarence, who is my companion. He helped me to talk to Rachel. He got me involved. I decided to join to increase my education and go to a higher level. I decided to wait before joining to see how Clarence liked it. He said it was good.

I met Rachel at the library and we talked about what I need to work on and what I want to learn. I thought it would take a few weeks to get a tutor, but I was surprised! Rachel had a tutor for me within one week. In the past, I had bad experiences with tutors. I never got anything done with them. It was one on one tutoring at your home. They came to you. It was a different literacy program.

When I was younger, I didn't have the opportunity to have regular schooling to get ahead. My parents tried to protect me, but they didn't help me to go into the regular system. They were afraid I couldn't cope with the pressure of the teachers and students. They thought I would be teased too much. In my mind, I thought if I had a chance, I would do what I could. If I had a chance to fit in, but I didn't have the chance. I didn't even have the chance to try it for a short period of time. I think that's what held me back on my education today. Now in school, people with disabilities have teachers' aides. If I would have had teachers' aide, I could have coped. Someone could have helped me take notes so I could keep up. I would've gotten ahead a lot easier.

The literacy program helps me to get out and meet new people. It helps me to learn about the library too. I never had the chance to learn about the library before. I had never used my library card either and I don't know how to use the computer. I want to learn how to use it. Plus, I want to work on different skills, like math and reading- especially reading. Reading is my biggest weakness. I also need to work on writing and putting my thoughts on paper.

The literacy program is helpful for people like me, who want help with whatever they need to work on. It takes a lot of work to keep the program running. It takes a lot of time. The little things are nice too. It's comforting to know they try to make you feel welcome with different things like tea, coffee, and parties. Without the tutors and Rachel though, there wouldn't be a program, because you need people involved to make it work.

Rachel is very outgoing. She does a good job because she is outgoing and very helpful to anybody in the program. I was fortunate to find a nice tutor. Her name is Kyla Russell. You need to have a connection with your tutor to make it work. I think it is important to feel you can be yourself so you can get more done. Plus, the tutor needs to have patience. You need to have patience yourself! It takes time to work on whatever you need to work on, because you only meet once a week. It's hard to get stuff done. It's not like school where you are in class every day. Sometimes you can do exercises if your tutor is

able to give you exercises to do at home. If you want to do that too, it will help.

I want to say thank you to everyone in the program. Thank you very much. It means a lot to me. I hope this program will continue for a long time. I hope I will have my tutor for a long time if she is able. I hope everybody finds the program helpful as well. It's important to keep doing what you need to do. It is important to finish what you start and not to give up.

Butterfly

BY RICHARD SCHMALZ

Butterfly

Against my window, it
flits and dives. Tilting
at the glass,
it batters its way
into
my mind's eye.

Mountain Climber

BY ELAINE FRAMPTON

Margaret climbs a mountain every week to get to class. Her physical challenges make it very difficult, in fact painful to stand, let alone walk, but she is not deterred.

Margaret has told me that some days when it is cold and miserable and she is feeling sore and tired, she wishes she were dead. Then she forgets about it and moves on, and does what she must do.

Sometimes during our sessions she will say "This work is tough", but I've never heard her say, "I can't" or "I won't". She says "I'll try".

Margaret says that her success in her school work has improved her confidence in other areas of her life. More and more she sees the value of every small, painful step and tries harder in everything she does.

When we first started our work together, Margaret said she felt that a better education would make her a more worthwhile person. As she climbs higher up the mountain, my main hope for her is that she will realize that anyone less 'worthwhile' would never have undertaken the journey in the first place.

Citadel

BY MARY THOMPSON

I was working at a hotel, The Citadel, next to the police station. I worked there for 24 years. If somebody didn't show up I had to cover for them. I used to work days and nights sometimes. I worked in the laundry, upstairs in the rooms, maintenance person. I did lots of stuff there.

When I was carrying my little girl, I worked there till I was nine months pregnant.

Some of the people there were nutty. One of the cooks was there for a long time. He was George - you could tell he was going to do something nasty but he didn't do it. He'd get someone else to do it for him. Like putting a cooked egg in my milk - he got Mikey, another cook, to do it for him.

There was too much joking in the laundry. When it was somebody's birthday we'd put butter or whipped cream on their nose. Not me, the other guys. Two girls tried on my uniform together but after a while, Darlene got as big as me. We'd have water fights with those spray water bottles. You'd squirt someone, you'd go behind the dryer and squirt someone. The supervisor was there. She used to get into it too. She was in on the joke, she didn't miss nothing. You gotta have some kind of joking otherwise you'd go insane.

There was Jim Terreo, he was a baker, bakes some muffins, Christmas cakes. He was a cool guy. And Scott and somebody else, another cook - Paul. They were just standing there joking and I walked past and they said, "Look, Mary" and lifted up their cook jackets. "Oh, look, look, Mary, which one is the hairiest?" They wouldn't let me pass till I looked. I said, "I'll let you know later. Show me later." They were all good looking men too. I just went, "I gotta go to break."

When I was cleaning out the bin to sort the linen to go in the machines I'd see

some mice. One woman put the mice - the baby mice - into an empty Kleenex box and then when Eileen came and saw the mice she jumped on the table and screamed, "Aah!" And she said a couple of nasty words after that. I said, "It wasn't me!"

We had good, good fun. We had a serious job to do but we somehow got it done but we were crazy. I don't miss the work but I miss the people.

The Wolves

BY DH OAKLEY

It was a dark and stormy night. We got lost in the woods. We were out hunting all day long and we lost our way. It was getting so dark that you couldn't see in front of you. The wind was blowing so strong that we had to put our hands over our eyes to see where we were headed. My son was not used to being out in the woods on a stormy day like this one. He was getting kind of scared so we sat down for a rest and tried to figure out where we had to go. All at once we both turned our heads and saw a wolf sitting on the path that we had to take. My son whistled, and the wolf stood right up and started to walk along the path. It was like the wolf was telling us to follow him. We sat there for a bit more. The wolf walked out of sight and we couldn't see it anymore. My son said to me, "Do you think he's telling us to follow him?" I just laughed at him and said, "You're crazy."

Then about ten or fifteen minutes later the wolf was back and was sitting right in the same spot. He did this three times, so we took a chance and followed him out of the woods. As we were walking the wolf disappeared and we couldn't see him anymore. My son was whistling a tune just trying to keep his spirits up and for some reason I turned around and saw a pack of wolves following behind us. I didn't tell my son that the wolves were following us because he might scare them and they might attack us. So we just kept walking to our truck. It was a long walk but we made it a long way and the wolves didn't bother us all the way out. We turned around and my son whistled a tune the wolves ran after us. They chased us right to the truck. We were lucky to get to the truck. We both talked it over and we decided to stay out of the woods until next year.

“|”

BY GAETANE SIROIR

I do not walk; you will find me in different places.

I wear all colours one or multiple at a time. I do not wear clothes.

I live in the wild, but I am domesticated.

I need care, some attention and water to survive.

I influence the equilibrium of nature. I'll always be there.

I get walked on, eaten, cut down, thrown away or carefully placed on a table for everyone to see their enjoyment.

I am beautiful; some people don't like me and others can't get enough of me.

I spread out on the ground, cover the trees yet still I live alone.

I am the symbol of love; they use me for joyful celebrations and more somber ones too.

I am soft at the touch, also tall, short, thin, wide, big, small, and more.

I am transformed by nature to become tangible and practical for your needs.

I have thousands of names - long names, scientific names and surnames but everyone knows me as the flower.

School

VICKY ISENER

I remember when I was younger. I used to play hooky, and didn't pay much attention in school, when I first started out. I failed primary twice, grade 1 once, and grade 4.

At the time, I wasn't the happiest I could be in school. I found it difficult to

pay attention and listen, and I also didn't have a lot of self-confidence. I was very frustrated because other problems were partly holding me back.

Around the age of 22 I started to come around and started getting better and started feeling better about myself. I decided it was time to gain my independence so I thought it was time to move out on my own.

I felt a strong feeling to go back to school to start where I left off. I wanted to catch up on the levels that I missed. Learning is more enjoyable now than it was back then because I have more confidence in myself than when I was younger.

My goal is to continue finishing school and to not let anything get in my way.

Tutoring

BY DAVID TRENBIRTH



HCLN tutor David Trenbirth receives at the Volunteer Appreciation Celebration at the Keshen Goodman Public Library

David Trenbirth is a literacy tutor for mature student David Riles at Keshen-Goodman library, with coordinator Linda Oakley.

It's no secret that keeping the interest of students over months and years in improving their reading skills and the understanding of the subjects depends a great deal of using interesting material. A student with low-end skills

can usually make progress with fairly simple reading tasks, and understand basic lessons in spelling and sentence construction, but I believe it is possible to "force" the student to a higher level by using a variety of library books and magazines that might at first sight seem too difficult.

This has been my experience in the past 18 months with my student, who has studied subjects as varied as Canadian military history, meteorology,

architecture, the B.C. gold rush, Halifax's connection with the Titanic sinking, and humorous stories from politicians and pioneers. Results in tests have varied from fair to quite good. "Exams" aside, the result of not relying on what my student refers to as "kids' books" has been increased self-confidence in tackling more complex material.

There is a second side to this method. It builds confidence in the tutor, in their ability to teach, and keeps their own interest.

In brief: keep lessons lively so both parties come to their weekly sessions with a sense of accomplishment and an ability to discuss relatively difficult material.

A Celebration of Life

BY ANN KELLY

The Apartment Program is a government-run program to teach people to get into the community. Every year, the Regional Residential Apartment Program has a meeting. This year's meeting was a celebration of the program being around for 25 years. All the people who had been in the program for 25 years got a boutonniere when they came in the door. They were also presented with a gift.

I couldn't believe it when I was given the biggest gift. I was given a mirror for being in the program for 25 years.

I have met a lot of people from all walks of life through the program. Sometimes I feel like it's a real family because we do a lot of things. We go on trips in the summer, like going to camp and going on day-trips and go places like to the valley. Through the years, two of the clients have passed away.

The counselors do a lot of running around to go to businesses to get donations for the silent auction.

Some of the people need supervision. They have never lived in an apartment before so they need help. They have a live-in that helps with everyday tasks. It helps them gain a sense of independence. In the program, the supervisors had a workshop that showed the people how to role-play. Role-playing shows people how they can behave in a positive way.

Running Marathons

LESLIE RYAN

Spring Garden Road Library Program

When I was 59 years old, I decided I would try running. I was a smoker. This made it hard for me to run. With the help of people from the YMCA, I stopped smoking.

I decided I would run a marathon. That is hard work and you have to train a long time. A marathon is twenty-six miles.

I have run all over Nova Scotia and Ottawa and Toronto. Now I run half marathons. That is thirteen miles. I meet a lot of nice people.

At Sea with the Coast Guard

BY MYLÈNE DIPENTA

I work with the Coast Guard. My job is to fix radios, computers, radars, TVs, sound systems, and lots of other things. Most of the time I work in a shop with ten other technicians. We go to the ships in the morning and come back at night. I like my job. Something different happens every day. You never know what will break! I started the job less than two years ago. I am still an apprentice, so there are lots of things I have to learn. But there are usually more experienced people around to help me out.

For two months during the year, though, I go to sea. I sail on one of the ice breakers or science research ships. During this time, if anything breaks, I am on my own. No one else can help me, because I am the only technician on the ship. Sometimes we are so far away from home that even cell phones and satellite telephones don't work. It was scary at first. I didn't really believe that I could do things by myself.

The first time I went to sea, I was very seasick for two days. I thought I would never get better. I was worried I would get fired because I couldn't do my job! Then I started to feel better. Soon I was working 12 hours a day, eating pie and pizza, and feeling fine. The first time something broke

and I had to fix it, I was very worried. I knew the ship couldn't sail unless the problem was fixed. If I didn't do well, we would have to end the trip early. I was nervous, but I took out my tools and did my best. Soon the problem was fixed, and the captain was very happy. After that, I never felt as scared again.

Sometimes it's hard being the only woman on the ship. The guys are nice but they don't really understand me. I try to be friendly, and hope that gradually their attitudes will change. I'm glad I went back to school to learn how to do this job. I have learned so much from it already.

The Romouski and Mooseheads Series

DAVID HICKEY

The Halifax Mooseheads and the Romouski Oceanics played in the Quebec Major Hockey League Finals in early May. It was a great series but Romouski outplayed and outshot the Mooseheads.

One of the reasons that Romouski won the series is because they had Sydney Crosby on their team. He is one of the best players in the league.

The Romouski Oceanics won the series four games to one. They played very well and had a great coach.

The series had terrific goal tending on both sides but the Oceanics had the best out of the two teams.

The Romouski Oceanics go on to the Memorial Cup where four teams play in different series. It should be a great Memorial Cup.

Kids and Violence in Today's Society

PRESENTED BY DERECK HILES

Kids seem to be very disobedient in today's society. Nowadays, children do not listen to their parents and do drugs and if their parents ask them to do things, they say they don't have to listen to them because they can call the

police or child welfare. I think they should give power back to the parents so that they can have more control over their kids.

In today's society parenting isn't like it used to be. In the past both parents would be together doing things with their kids like taking them to the movies, baseball, outings, family nights. In today's parenting, parents do not spend enough quality time with their kids. They spend more time working especially single parents. Marriages today result in a lot of divorces leaving the mothers to bring up the children by themselves. Since the father figure is absent in such homes sometimes the kids don't listen to their mothers and get out of control.

The education system in today's society is very poor due to the fact that there are more students in classes. As a result kids do not get one-on-one attention with their teacher. And also teachers do not spend enough time on teaching their subjects. I think that more time should be spent on one subject at a time and some students require more time and help than other students. When students fall behind in the education system they are tempted to drop out of school. Therefore I think that there should be two teachers per classroom so more time can be spent per child.

Children watch more television today than socializing with other children or being active. By children watching more television they learn and do what they see on T.V. Some programs that children watch have vulgar language that children repeat and do. There is a lot of crime and violent programs and movies that children see, play and do, for example violent video games that kids play today on PS2 and other T.V. games. Children play these games and go out and try it like it's the real thing. Children aren't always supervised when watching T.V. and playing games. Therefore they watch anything they want.

The justice system also plays a role in kids' violence. It is too lenient on crimes committed by juveniles. I think that young kids break the law and get away with it because they are underage. The young offenders act protects them and the juvenile offenders know that and take advantage of that. I think that the young offender act should be changed and young kids be held responsible for their actions and crimes accordingly. If the punishments are harder then the kids would think twice about committing a crime.

In conclusion, I believe the justice system should discipline children who

break the law and should have strict rules in order to stop children from recommitting violent acts. Television and movies that are put on TV should be coded or blocked so children can't watch violent shows. Violent games should be taken off the market. Single parents should be supported to help them raise their children. Finally the education system should put more programs in schools to better educate the children so they can be productive in today's society. Kids who are out of control should be put into programs to help them manage anger and avoid violence, robbery, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. This will help them learn what their violent behaviour does and how it affects people in our society.

My Dreams

BY PERCY OLIVER

As a teenager, I dreamt about becoming a truck driver. I used to see the big trucks like 18-wheelers and I always thought I would enjoy the challenge and the lifestyle. It was a good way to travel and to meet people. I wanted to meet the right person, have kids and go on long hauls to see many different places in the United States and Canada.

At 30, I started to work on my dreams: being a truck driver and upgrading. I prayed about getting myself a class one license to drive an 18-wheeler. Then I found out about Teamworks, a program that helps people with learning disabilities. Don Looper, a gentleman from Teamworks, helped me find the money and support that I needed to get my license. Then in 1998, I went on a course, passed it, and I got my class one! I also continued my upgrading. This helped me to feel good about myself. I studied spelling, reading, math and map reading skills and this helped me pursue a career as a truck driver.

But I guess God had different plans. This is the year 2005 and now I'm doing the same thing all over again, trying to find the support that I need to reach my goals. Although I have always wanted to drive a truck, I have had to change my goals to be more realistic. I may have the chance to get my class two license to drive a bus. If I could drive a bus, I would like to work as a shuttle bus driver and one day run my own shuttle bus business.

God has taught me a lesson about dreams. I worked hard to get my class one license and the same year I got it, I lost it after being involved in a serious accident. It seems difficult to get my class one again and I am thinking that

God wants it to be this way so that I can be with other people. I enjoy being with people and God has brought me to meet many different people along the different path I have taken. I'm still not sure where the path is headed. I'm taking it one day at a time, still dreaming and always following my heart.

Finding a Pet

BY MELVIN J. DOYLE

My dad was a hunter and a fisherman. He was also a lumberjack man, meaning he didn't have any power saw back in his day. When he raised us with Mom as young kids he always got me up in the morning. He washed me, dressed me and fed me. Then we went into the woods with Uncle Willy to cut firewood for the stove to keep us warm in the wintertime.

When we came out of the woods, he and Uncle Willy tied the horse to the gate. Then Uncle Willy and Dad unloaded the logs in a pile beside the saw-horse. I used to sit up on top of the logs while he was sawing them with a bucksaw, not a power-saw. Back then there were no power saws to be seen.

While he was sawing I would watch the sawdust fall on the ground. Then when we were done Uncle Willy went home with the horse. Then my dad would take me into the house to have dinner.

One day when we came out of the woods, I saw a truck in the yard. It was loaded with animals. I walked up to the truck and said to the man who was driving it: "What kind of animals do you have in here?" He said: "Little guy, I have budgie birds, hamsters, rabbits, baby ducklings and baby chickens." His name was Ralph Nuss from the Valley.

So he asked me to get my mom or dad to see if I could have a pet. I walked into the house and asked Mom if I could have a budgie bird for a pet. She said no.

I started to cry because I couldn't have the pet budgie. So the truck went off.

I had noticed something blue and white in the sawdust pile so I went over and I saw this little bird. I didn't know what kind of bird it was but I caught him and I ran into the house. I said to dad: "Dad, look what I have here! Can I keep him?"

