



THE READER

**A NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PROJECT LITERACY KELOWNA SOCIETY
205-591 BERNARD AVENUE KELOWNA BC V1Y 6N9 PHONE 762-2163 FAX: 762-0764**

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PLKS Learner: An Artist and Humanitarian

Christian Lafrance, a recent transplant from Quebec, is a delightful embodiment of the French phrase "joie de vivre". After spending a couple of summers in the Okanagan picking fruit Christian was won over by the lake, the beaches and the weather. He decided to "break free" from his life in Quebec, seeking "new challenges" and opportunities in Kelowna. Having studied Psycho-Education at the University of Quebec in Hull, Christian set out looking for employment in the social services field. He came to PLKS this past fall and worked with his tutor, Sandra and Workplace Literacy Consultant, Barb Hagan; he knew that he needed to improve his speaking and writing skills in order to find a job in his chosen field. Almost immediately, Christian found a permanent position at the Kelowna and District Society for Community Living as a support worker in their day program. Successfully employed, Christian is now able to devote more time to his passion: the arts. An accomplished artist, musician and poet, he recently displayed his pastels at a group art exhibition sponsored by the French Cultural Centre and was on hand for the signing of his poetry book "Asile de la Joie". Translated, "Asylum of Joy" sums up Christian's philosophy: "To keep your mental health, sometimes you've got to be a little crazy!" Christian, your infectious smile and positive spirit endear you to everyone you meet! We wish you continued success.



From the Board

The Board of Directors has had a very busy and productive first quarter.

We have done some updating of our Policy and Procedure manual, and are currently reviewing the terms of reference for our committees. Some board members joined the staff at our booth at the Okanagan Opportunities Fair at Orchard Park on April 16th". Our Awareness Committee has been busy looking into various means of showcasing our organization in the community.

We regret that one of our members, Ron van der Meer, has resigned his position due to personal reasons. Ron was a Director for over 2 years, and his contributions were any; his most recent and largest project was the printing and packaging of the "Bridging Barriers to Learning" art cards. We thank Ron for his dedication and commitment to the organization at the Board level, and wish him all the best. Ron is still a tutor with Project Literacy, so we hope to see him in the office now and then.

The Board is also sorry to say goodbye to the Executive Director, Glenn Kissmann. Glenn's time with Project Literacy was short but he fit into the role easily, and managed to make many connections within the community. We wish him well in his future endeavours, and hope that he will stop in for a visit once in awhile. We are pleased to announce that on May 1st, Barbara Hagan will be taking over the management role. Barb came to PLKS as a tutor, and soon came on staff as our Workplace Literacy Consultant. The Board of Directors looks forward to working with her as we take Project Literacy Kelowna into the future.

Lastly, the board and staff would like to thank everyone that made our Volunteer Appreciation evening a success. A special thanks to Dr. Specs (Orchard Plaza next to Save on Foods) who generously donated two eyeglass frames for a draw held that evening. The lucky winners will be announced in our next newsletter!

KELOWNA CENTENNIAL 2005

Help us raise awareness of Project Literacy, and have fun at the same time!

Project Literacy Kelowna Society will be participating in various aspects of the Kelowna Centennial celebrations taking place on May 5th, 7th, and 8th. Activities might include parade marshalling, ticket taking, or helping out at the Family Picnic or other events.

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to become involved.

If you are interested in joining in the fun, and supporting Project Literacy at the same time, please call the office at 762-2163, and someone from the Centennial Committee will get in touch with you.

**MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!!
Did you know?**

1. When you make a donation to the United Way, you can specify **Project Literacy Kelowna** as your recipient of choice?
2. That Project Literacy Kelowna has a **Planned Giving Program** (endowment fund) set up with the Central Okanagan Foundation? If you would like more information, please call the PLKS office.

WEBSITES WORTH YOUR WHILE

<http://iteslj.org/questions/>

Looking for ways to jump start conversations with your ESL learner? This site has thousands of conversation starters grouped within dozens of categories.

<http://literacynet.org/cnnsf>

The Learning Resources site uses current CNN news articles to promote literacy. Each week a new story is featured and accompanied by a comprehensive set of interactive activities that test the reader's comprehension.

<http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html>

This site lists common errors in word usage in the English language. Each example provides a sample of wrong usage as well as the correct.

Congratulations, Learners!

In a recent article, "The contribution of literacy to economic growth and individuals' earnings" (Stats Canada), the authors conclude that "differences in literacy and numeracy skills explain one third of the variation in wages in Canada. In addition, further gains in earnings are associated with other skills and knowledge acquired through education." An individual with "level 1" literacy skills makes approximately half the annual income that an individual with level 4/5 does.

Thus, as Project Literacy nears its half way mark of our contract year, we would like to acknowledge the many successes of our clients; they are all fully aware of the benefits of improved literacy in their own lives!

Almost 30 learners have found part or full time employment. They are now working in jobs that range from the service industry (Michaelbrook Ranch Golf Course, Okanagan Golf Club, Hoang Gia Restaurant, La Boulangerie and the Vineyard Inn) to the trades and manufacturing (Interior Truck & Trailer Service, Underground BC, Falcon Ladder and Scaffold Mfg., and Norelco Cabinets).

Over a dozen learners have been able to go on to further education and training. Several individuals are enrolled in the Human Service Worker and the Home Support Worker programs and many more are now taking Adult Basic Education courses at OUC. Congratulations to all of you!

THE EMPLOYMENT PAGES

Tough Interview Questions

Why have you been unemployed so long?

You won't make a great impression by saying, "I wanted to be a full-time parent." When asked this question, give a brief answer and then move on to explain that you're a good fit for the position. For example, "I wanted to be a full-time mom, and I've stayed current in the field. Now that my child is older, I'm eager to get back to work. When I saw your ad, I got excited, because I could be of help to you."



What is a weakness of yours?

The rule of thumb is to take a negative trait and make it sound like an asset. For example, say you are a stickler for meeting deadlines and will stay on top of a project until it is done according to your specifications, which may cause you to sometimes work late nights. Again - just make yourself sound good.

What do you think of your last boss?

Be careful. Respond concisely in a way that indicates your respect for authority and your ability to get along with superiors.

What are your goals?

Sometimes it's best to talk about short-term and intermediate goals rather than locking yourself into the distant future. For example, "My immediate goal is to get a job in a growth-oriented company. My long-term goal will depend on where the company goes. I hope to eventually grow into a position of responsibility."

Why should we hire you?

This question is purely about selling yourself. Think of yourself as the product. Why should the customer buy? The more detail you give, the better your answer will be. This is not a time to talk about what you want. Rather, it is a time to summarize your accomplishments and relate what makes you unique.



These questions were compiled from the website:
www.monster.com

Tutor Tips... "Quick-tivities"

Below is a list of warmer/cooler/filler activities (designed for ESL learners but could be used with any learner). For these ideas and more, check out: <http://www.esicafe.com/>, <http://www.eslflow.com/Index.html>, <http://itesli.org/Lessons/>, and www.developingteachers.com

Categories: The learner writes 6 or 7 different categories, for example: Country, Adjective, Verb, Profession etc. The tutor then gives a letter and the learner has to fill the categories with words beginning with this letter.

Example: for the letter "B": Brazil, Big, Be, Baker etc.

Categories 2: Brainstorm all words that: melt, are green, are worn, are soft etc., etc.

Word Association: The tutor starts the game by saying a word, such as "Hotel".

For example: Tutor: Hotel, Learner: Bed, Tutor: Room, Learner: Service, Tutor: Food, Learner: Restaurant

Different Uses: Learners think of as many different uses for different objects as possible: e.g. a brick

Chain Story: Tutor begins with a story, learner continues with a sentence, tutor adds another and so on.

Odd Word Out: You need three or four words that can be put in the same category of meaning. Add one that in one way or another, does not belong. Learners have to find which one is the "distractor" and explain why.

For example: money currency penny change

The odd word is penny (which is concrete and a countable noun), as opposed to the other three words which are abstract and uncountable nouns.

Art Master: The tutor describes a picture orally. The learner simultaneously recreates the picture on a sheet of paper, correctly including named objects in accurate positions. This game reinforces the use of prepositions, such as to the right of, to the left of, in the middle of, or under, etc. It also reinforces the vocabulary of concrete objects learners have already learned before. The complexity of the picture will depend on the level of the students.

Tutor Reporting

Monthly reporting is a crucial, though sometimes neglected aspect of tutoring! The monthly reports provide a record for PLKS staff to refer to, provide a history for future tutors and allow staff to assist you in your work. **Tutor reports are due by the 20th of each month - if you wish to submit them by email please let Janet know!**
Thanks!



New Resources

Teaching English One to One: J. Downman & J. Shepherd

This gives new fresh ideas and techniques to improve your tutoring. It includes a needs analysis to pinpoint areas of focus as well as constructive ways of improving verbal skills.

A Grab Bag of Telephone and Socializing Activities: Elizabeth Ganong and Dan Ingrain.

Fun activities to help your ESL learner improve his or her conversational skills.