

This Week in Literacy

September 26, 2008

The NWT Literacy Council is a non-profit, non-government agency dedicated to supporting the development of literacy in all official languages of the NWT.

Literacy Dates

NWT Literacy Week	September 28 – October 4, 2008
National Family Literacy Day	January 27, 2009
Aboriginal Languages Month	March 2009
International Children's Book Day	April 2, 2009
World Book Day	April 23, 2009

Community Events and Information

NWT Literacy Week

Next week is NWT Literacy Week! We encourage you to get out there and join in the literacy events in your community. We would also like to encourage everyone to *Read for 15* on Tuesday, September 30th, 2008. The NWT has challenged Nunavut to see who can get the most people reading on this day. Last year the NWT won by a very small margin. This year we would like to defend our title and increase our numbers and get everyone in the NWT reading. It doesn't matter what you read – you can read email, magazines, the newspaper, a novel or comics – just as long as you read.

After reading for 15 minutes, participants in the *Read for 15* Challenge need to report to the NWT Literacy Council. You can do this as an individual or as a group – such as a division or even as an entire GNWT department! You can report your results by phoning our office at 873-9262 or 1-866-599-6758, by e-mailing nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca or faxing us at (867) 873-2176. **Have a great week!**

Events in Yellowknife for NWT Literacy Week

- **Author Visit** – Maureen Ulrich will visit Yellowknife schools on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.
- **Tuesday – Ministerial Literacy Awards and Adult Learners' Luncheon** – The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment will present the 2008 Ministerial

Literacy Awards at the Adult Learners' Luncheon at Northern United Place:
12:00 – 1:00. All adult learners welcome.

- **Tuesday – Literacy Games for Adult Learners** –Join The Native Women's Association Training Centre for snacks, fun and some friendly competition from 1:30 – 3:00 pm.
- **Tuesday – Read for 15 Challenge** –**Read for 15** minutes and then fill out a form at a booth around town or call the NWT Literacy Council at 873-9262.
- **Wednesday – Progressive Story** – Contribute your line to a progressive story about literacy and life in Yellowknife. Join us at noon in front of the Post Office.
- **Thursday – Launch of Northern Edge – Online Resource** – *The Northern Edge* is an online learning resource produced by the NWT Literacy Council. Join us at the launch of the newest edition at The Native Women's Association Training Centre at 1:30 pm.
- **Friday – Lunch with a Bunch** – Lunch and literacy activities for Yellowknife seniors at the Baker Centre at noon.
- **Saturday – Rotary Readers Story Time** – Story time for young children at the Book Cellar 10:00 – 11:00 am.

Celebrating the Local, Negotiating the School: Symposium on Language and Literacy in Aboriginal Communities

A Symposium at the University of Saskatchewan, November 7- 8, 2008, will be hosted by the Aboriginal Education Research Centre and the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre Bundle 2, Nourishing the Learning Spirit. The goal of this symposium is to explore the ways in which local literacies develop and function within local Aboriginal communities. Current research indicates that building on the language knowledge of learners enables them to use their linguistic understandings to access standard English as a language of power in the educational and political realms without relinquishing their local language, a language of power in community. For more information go to <http://aerc.usask.ca/whatsnew.html>

In the News

Phil Fontaine, national chief Assembly of First Nations

Posted in [Canada Votes - Your Interview](#), Posted on September 24, 2008 10:10 AM
Aboriginal issues have so far not been top of mind in this federal election campaign. Although not all party platforms have been released, the ones that have been have

sections on Canada's relationship with Aboriginal people. According to the 2006 census, Aboriginal people make up 3.8 per cent of the country's population. About 40 per cent of aboriginal children live in poverty, and life expectancy is about seven years shorter than the rest of the population.

But what is needed? The Assembly of First Nations has launched a campaign to get First Nations people involved in the federal election. The AFN is encouraging First Nation communities to hold a day of political action on Sept. 29 to talk about the federal election, and encourage federal leaders to include aboriginal issues in the debates. AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine has compiled a questionnaire for party leaders on Aboriginal issues. This is your chance to question him. Submit your questions, and we will pick the best to ask Fontaine. His answers will appear here on Monday, Sept. 29. CBCNews.ca wants your questions.

How to participate

Remember, when sending in your question:

- A short question is better than a long one.
- One question is better than many.
- If a question needs some context, keep it brief.
- Preference will be given to questions from those who give a full name and location.
- Questions may be edited for length and clarity.

Liberals will restore literacy funding if elected on October 14

National Adult Literacy Database, Ottawa

A new Liberal government will restore funding for literacy programs axed by the Conservatives, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion said on Raise-A-Reader Day, September 24. "The Conservative Party believes that there isn't a role for the federal government in literacy and that funding for adult literacy is a waste of time," said Mr. Dion. "I believe we must address our nation's literacy challenge if Canada is going to excel in the 21st-century knowledge economy."

The Canwest Raise-a-Reader campaign is a nation-wide fundraising effort in support of family literacy. In 2006, the Conservatives chopped funding for adult literacy by almost \$9 million a year, and closed the National Literacy Secretariat. When the cuts were announced, the Conservatives' press release described the programs being cut as "wasteful" and likened them to a "fat-trimming" exercise. Their cuts came at a time when statistics showed that 42 per cent of Canadians age 16 to 65 – representing nine million Canadians – struggle with low literacy. The week the cuts were announced, then Treasury Board President John Baird was fundraising for children's literacy

programs at the same time as he described literacy programs for adults as a waste of money. "I think if we're spending \$20 million and we have one out of seven folks in the country that are functionally illiterate, we've got to fix the ground floor problem and not be trying to do repair work after the fact," Baird said.

Mr. Dion called it a mean-spirited irresponsible attack. "It ignores the fact that literacy starts at home and that literacy is a key contributor to many national priorities such as productivity," he said. A 2005 C.D. Howe Institute report showed that a one per cent rise in a country's average literacy rates would boost productivity and lead to an \$18-billion-a-year increase in Canada's Gross Domestic Product.

Ministers want to improve aboriginal education

Published Wednesday September 24th, 2008, Fredericton

Canada's education ministers emerged from two days of meetings Tuesday, promising continued work on a hodgepodge of issues, including lagging aboriginal education.

The ministers pledged to use future sessions to close the education gap between aboriginals and non-aboriginals in Canada - a topic they called "an economic, social and ethical necessity." New Brunswick Education Minister Kelly Lamrock said the council of education ministers will invite the country's First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders to discuss the issue at the council's next session in Saskatchewan this February. "In a country as prosperous and fortunate and blessed as Canada, there's no excuse for having too many children and adults left behind by perpetually high rates of illiteracy and low rates of education," said Lamrock at a press conference.

"We must work together to forever close the achievement gap that has been too stubborn and bedeviled too many governments for too long." To read more go to <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/search/article/425160>

Resources and Websites

Employer Investment in Workplace Learning: Report on the Yellowknife Roundtable

The issue of employer investment in workplace learning has been the subject of recent discussions at the national level. However, since the nature of the labour market and the institutional structure of education and training systems vary across provinces and territories, it is important to gain an understanding of these differing provincial, territorial or regional perspectives. The Canadian Council on Learning's Work and Learning Knowledge Centre (WLKC) is partnering with Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) to convene a series of roundtables on employer investment in

workplace learning, involving senior government officials and senior representatives from business, labour, colleges/universities, Aboriginal organizations and NGOs from a particular province, territory or region. The goal of the roundtables is to identify practical steps to ensure that the quantity and quality of workplace learning in Canada matches the needs of the economy and maximizes the potential of Canadian workers.

The first of these roundtables was held in Toronto on December 6, 2007, the second in Halifax on February 18, 2008, and the third in Yellowknife on May 21, 2008. This report presents the highlights of the discussion at the Yellowknife roundtable. To download a copy go to <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/NR/rdonlyres/79D0C8C5-B9AE-4C78-8964-DD4476D991DF/0/YellowknifeRoundtableReportEN.pdf>

Please feel free to pass this e-news along to others. Let us know if you would like to be removed from our e-news list.

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