



Association of
**Workplace
 Educators**
 of Nova Scotia

CONNECTING...

Fall 2007/Winter 2008

AWENS Newsletter is published twice a year

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Larsen Packers Ltd. Excellence in Products and Workplace Education!

by Ginny Schultz

It was a privilege to be at the Conference Board of Canada Workplace Education Conference held in Toronto, in December 2006. It was rewarding to witness Larsen Packers Ltd, of Berwick, N.S., receive the “large business award” for Excellence in Workplace Education.

Since 2003, a total of 65 Larsen employees have attended a workplace program in Essential Skills Upgrading, for which I was fortunate to be the instructor. From the start, it was evident that this was not an ordinary group.

They were in the driver’s seat right from the start. There was a great mix of participants’, both salaried and hourly. Tremendous support was offered, not only during the initial program, but it also continued in the following programs. Offers to contribute to the success of the program came from the whole plant: past participants, management, friends and family. One employee became a weekly mentor and was there only because he wanted to help. Here at Larsen Packers, learning is viewed as essential to the well-being of the company.

Once employees have taken a program, they believe in “giving back”. As a seasoned instructor, working here was definitely one of the highlights of my career!

Workplace Education Ambassador Awards

Adult learners who have improved their literacy skills and succeeded in workplace education along with the literacy organizations and volunteers who support them, were honoured September 7th, at Nova Scotia's 17th annual International Literacy Day celebrations in Dartmouth.

Workplace Education Ambassador Awards were presented to Nova Scotians who participated in literacy and upgrading programs in the workplace. The award recipients are celebrated for their commitment to lifelong learning through the promotion of, and participation in, workplace education initiatives. Each recipient received a \$200 gift certificate to attend programs offered by Nova Scotia Community College. The recipients were

Nicole Fiddes, Convergys, Truro
Sarah Devine, Townsview Estates and Westside Villa, Truro
Rosalie McAuley, Guysborough Memorial Hospital, CUPE Local 2525
Ken Pool, Home Depot, Halifax
Susan Rann, Sonja Hansen, Mike Francis, Srt McNeil, Nicole Fiddes, Neela Mattatal, Scott DeCoste, Steve Davenport, Colleen O'Connor, Convergys project team, Convergys, Truro
Gennie Himmelman, Elmsdale Lumber, Elmsdale, Hants Co.

Excerpt from a Department of Education news release, September 7th, 2007
www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20070907001

AWENS Web Site

We've updated our web site! Take a look and tell us what you think.
(www.awens.ca)

You asked for a vibrant and informative web site with fresh and appropriate content that reflects what's going on in the regions. We'll provide you with links to workplace education resources. Our site will also include job postings, calls for proposals but won't be limited to those items.

You will once again be able to access the forum. As you know, our forum has been dormant for some time and the content wasn't reflecting who we are and what we do. A moderator will ensure the integrity of the forum page. An administrator will help keep the site fresh and relevant.

The web site, however, is yours and needs to reflect what you want or need. Please share your comments, issues, and interests. (You will be contacted for your input and feedback) So, keep us posted on your concerns and what's going on in your region.

Violence: Not Part of the Job

New Workplace Violence Regulations
by Leslie Childs

Nova Scotia's Department of Environment and Labour is working toward improving safety in the workplace by bringing in regulations to strengthen employers' responsibility to

protect workers from physical violence and threats of physical violence on the job.

The regulations focus on improving safety in higher risk sectors -- such as health care, retail, schools, community colleges, and government services -- where workplace violence is most likely to occur.

Recent research on workplace violence in Nova Scotia in 2007 conducted by the Centre for Occupational Health and Safety of St. Mary's University shows that from a representative group of 1400 Nova Scotians surveyed, 20 percent had been subjected to workplace violence. The largest percentage, more than 12 percent, had been threatened with physical assault while more than 11 percent had objects thrown at them. In the majority of cases, the violence originated from the public or from clients. Transit services are an example of an affected sector ...[where]...60 percent of Metro Transit Bus Operators have experienced violence from members of the public.

Government, as an employer, will lead the way in complying with the regulations. The Public Service Commission will amend training courses to address completion of workplace violence hazard assessments and will develop government policies that will support departmental initiatives.

The new regulations require employers in certain sectors to assess the risk of violence and to implement a plan to reduce those risks. These requirements will better protect workers from violent acts on the job and ensure employees have information and training to know how to protect themselves.

Employers will be supported with information tools, a plain language guide to the regulations, and, in partnership with Workers' Compensation Board and Nova Scotia Community College, training sessions for employers and employees.

The regulations will be phased in to allow employers time to address them. Employers will have six months to complete a hazard assessment. A plan to address those hazards, including an implementation schedule, must be in place within a year.

Here's the final word. These regulations are attached to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The regulations were announced in April 2007 and are being rolled out in stages with the first real compliance date of April 1, 2008.

As of Oct 1, 2007 workplaces should be implementing a risk analysis assessment and be ready start a prevention plan as of by March 31, 2008

To reduce the burden on medium and small businesses, the Department of the Environment and Labour is offering training free for businesses on how to do a risk assessment.

The best website for more information is www.gov.ns.ca/enla

On their home page you will see a link to a feature item on workplace violence.

For further information access:
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/healthandsafety/docs/WorkplaceViolencePreventionStrategy.pdf>

What's In the News?

First United National Diabetes Day

by Sue Boutilier

It was an incredible honour and privilege to be one of two representatives of the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) at the United Nations Headquarters for the first UN-observed Diabetes Day on November 14, 2007. The UN Resolution on Diabetes represents hope and possibility for those with diabetes.

Since diabetes is very much a family disease, I did everything I could to ensure that my family could make the trip with me. I was so lucky to have so many loved ones with me, both physically there and in spirit. Their love, encouragement, and support have made a huge difference in my life.

Being there, I felt part of something special, and to commemorate the UN Resolution, I started the Resolution Torch of Diabetes Advocacy. Please think about how you might celebrate the United Nations World Diabetes Day on November 14, 2008.



Sue Boutilier and family, United Nations Headquarters, New York. Sue is an AWENS member and works with NSCC.

Annual General Meeting



Left to right : Virginia Vacheresse, AWENS Chair
Ginny Schultz, Vice Chair

AWENS Annual General Meeting was held on June 1st at the Provincial Library in Halifax. A total of 28 members and six Department of Education staff were present.

The election of Regional Representatives to the Board produced the following results:

Cape Breton Regional Reps: Jo-Anne Binns and Martin Kennedy (alternate)

Metro Regional Reps: Pat Thompson and Alison Petten (alternate)

Valley Regional Reps: Fred Ross and Joan Ross (alternate)

Southwestern Regional Reps: nil

Northern/Strait Regional Reps: Wayne Vacheresse and Chris Lewis (alternate)

Central Regional Rep: Leslie Childs

Following the AGM, Sue Boutilier introduced the group to a new curriculum resource—*Workplace*

Mentoring Works. This material includes a toolkit, *A Guide to Teaching and Learning in the Workplace*.

Very simply put, mentoring is people working with other people to learn new things. The skilled trades learn while they earn, so re-establishing a more formal connection between workplace mentoring and apprenticeship makes sense.

Profiles

We'd like you to meet your AWENS' Board of Directors

CAPE BRETON REGION

Jo-Anne Binns has been an adult educator in both a post-secondary and community based learning environment since 1992.

She became a member of AWENS back in 1999 and received her certification as a Workplace Educator in 2002. Jo-Anne said, "Being involved in community-based Workplace Education, I saw the connection with essential skills development and classroom instruction as being paramount in the development of learning strategies for adult learners". She has also provided meaningful work placements for many learners by linking them with employment and mentorship opportunities in her community.

She has assisted in the "plain-languaging" of curricula and promoting best practices in education and learning, and she continues to facilitate portfolio development in the areas of Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition. Along with being a Portfolio Practitioner, Jo-Anne is also a Learning Disability Risk Assessor, a First

Aid/CPR and WHMIS Instructor, Adult Education Instructor, a Literacy Upgrading Practitioner and a Volunteer Program Manager.

Currently, Jo-Anne is working as an Employer Engagement Navigator with the Department of Education for the "Invest In Youth" Initiative. Her mandate is to develop a database of committed employers who have agreed to participate in and partner with Nova Scotia's education system by offering our youth the opportunity to share knowledge, experience and skills of their workplace.

In addition to her day job, Jo-Anne serves on the Board of Directors for AWENS as the Cape Breton Regional Representative, the Provincial Board of Directors for Literacy Nova Scotia, and the Board of Directors for the newly formed Equity Advisory Council of Cape Breton and various Committees.

Martin Kennedy was born in 1952 in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. He attended Dalhousie University and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University in Toronto. However, for the past thirty years, his career has been centered on adult education. He was one of the founding members of AWENS.

Martin's passion is facilitating adults in their efforts to acquire, enhance and demonstrate the Essential Skills they require to fulfil their dreams – particularly their math skills. He was chosen to receive AWENS' Instructor of the Year award at its Institute held in Dundee, Cape Breton in 2003. He resides in Dominion, Cape Breton.

Martin is the **Chair** of AWENS' Board.

VALLEY REGION

Fred Ross has been involved in working and mentoring with electrical apprentices for well over thirty years.

His first experience of teaching in a classroom was in 1994 when he substituted for an electrical instructor at the Annapolis Valley Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College. Since 1999, he has earned accreditations in the field of adult education through the Department of Education, AWENS, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, the Nova Scotia Community College & Human Resource Development Canada, and Henson College at Dalhousie University.

Fred has taught several courses for the Annapolis County Learning Network, AWENS, Nova Scotia Community College, and Local 625 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

He thoroughly enjoys working with people and feels great satisfaction when he has been able to help others increase their knowledge and understanding in their studies.

Fred is the ***Vice-Chair*** of AWENS' Board

Joan Ross has been involved in adult education since 1991 when she, literally, rolled into a position. (At her interview, the chairs were on casters; she sat down and much to her chagrin, rolled down an uneven floor away from the interview table!) Despite the rolling beginning, she was hired by the Nova Scotia Community College, Customized Training, as one of the first instructors in the Annapolis Valley for the relatively

new to Nova Scotia, Adult Basic Education program.

Joan taught her first program for Workplace Education at the Conway Workshop Association in 1999 (a 15 month contract). She joined AWENS and had the privilege of attending the first Practitioners' Institute at Liscombe Lodge. She has had other Workplace Ed contracts including with the Department of Transportation and Public Works. She was nominated Instructor of the Year in 2001.

Joan completed the Workplace Education Instructor Certification Program in 2003. She continues to be an active AWENS member, attending certification workshops, Annual General Meetings, various trainings, and all the Practitioners' Institutes. She has been an alternate Board member for several years.

She has continued working with adult learners in various capacities: a private school, the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, the Annapolis County Learning Network, the Learn\$ave program.

Most recently, Joan is completing her third year teaching in the Nova Scotia Community College School of Access, Adult Learning Program at Annapolis Valley Campus, Middleton. Her students are working toward the Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults.

METRO REGION

Pat Thompson resides in Timberlea with her 14 year old dog, Moe. She retired in 2001 after 31 years with the Dept of

Community Services. She was the Coordinator of Income Assistance Training responsible for developing and delivering policy and computer training to over 400 staff.

Pat has been a member of AWENS since 2003, received her Certification in 2006, and delivers computer programs for Workplace Education.

Pat is the *Treasurer* of AWENS' Board.

Alison J. Petten, RN, BScN is a self-employed educator and health consultant who has found her niche with Workplace Education. She contributes to the development of essential skills as an instructor, Organizational Needs Assessment Consultant, and AWENS board member. Alison is busy facilitating a variety of workplace programs for caregivers. These include documentation, communication, teamwork, leadership, clinical problem solving, and physical assessment skills. Alison resides in Halifax with her husband, Dave Staples and son, Luke.

Alison is an active volunteer at Ecole Rockingham School and is vice-president of the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia.

CENTRAL REGION

Leslie Childs is a long-time adult educator with experience teaching reading, writing, communication, computer, and math across Canada including the Northwest Territories. She has lived in Amherst since 1999 and does contract work for AWENS, the Career Resource Centre, NSCC, and the Cumberland Adult Network for

Upgrading (CAN-U) as well as individual tutoring. Leslie is a passionate advocate for essential skills and has recently become a member of the Nova Scotia Partners for Workplace Education, a government advisory group, which brings representatives from business, labour, government and practitioners to the table to find, enhance, and promote learning opportunities for Nova Scotia's workforce. As well, she writes professionally, knits compulsively, and loves good food. Oh yes, she's also crazy about grammar...really!!! and actually enjoyed reading Lynn Truss' "Eats, Shoots & Leaves" a delightfully funny treatise on punctuation.

Leslie is the *Secretary* of AWENS' Board.

NORTHERN/STRAIT REGION

Wayne Vacheresse was born in Halifax but grew up in Trenton, Nova Scotia. He completed his post secondary education at St. Mary's University and taught in the public school system of Halifax County for 32 years. He was active as a volunteer in many organizations: sports, fire-fighting, Scouts, church and genealogy. Since his retirement, Wayne has expanded his interests in education by being an active participant in workplace education with AWENS and by also volunteering at the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry in Stellarton. Wayne is married, has three sons and six grandchildren.

Chris Lewis has been delivering and developing adult education in the fields of business, essential skills, and IT for over 10 years. Originally from

Lunenburg NS, he received his Business degree from Acadia and then moved to PEI where he instructed the business, accounting, and IT in Holland College's diploma programs. He also delivered Career Skills courses for 5 years. Returning to NS, he facilitated learning in numerous disciplines at NSCC for the next 6 years. Adult education is a passion for Chris. He has developed courses and curricula for small and large companies across the Maritimes. He currently owns web4u.ca (a web development/hosting company). His motto in life is, "Have a great attitude and expect great things; share this philosophy with as many people as you can!"

Chris is the *Privacy Officer* of AWENS' Board.

Practitioner Supports

AWENS and Skill Development recently embarked on a new project to update the Workplace Education Initiatives Instructor Manual, Administration Package and to create two new curricula: Communication Skills for Supervisors and Essential Skills for Small Business

The work is being done under the direction of project manager Steve Deveaux and several working groups. We'll keep you posted by email about the release of new curricula, certification modules, and other resources.

Regional Updates

Central Region (for the Cumberland, Colchester, and Hants areas)

Colleen O'Conner, Central Region's Skill Development Co-ordinator from Truro, brokered 32 programs in her region during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. These included programs focusing on reading, math, writing, document use, teamwork, communication, computers, and business communication. The employers taking part in essential skills programming represented six sectors: trucking, manufacturing, service industry, small business, and private.

In addition, Colleen supervised four Organizational Needs Assessments (ONA's) in various parts of the Central Region. Along with three Regional Development Agencies, she also was heavily involved with the Business Retention and Expansion project lead by NS Business Inc. This project is gathering extensive data from business and industry to identify needs and assist with meeting those needs.

Partnering with Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) from Colchester and Hants along with Truro and District Chamber of Commerce and business and industry sectors, Central Region is working to bring small business together to take advantage of the offerings available through the Workplace Education initiatives.

Northern/Strait Region (for the Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough area)

Robin Jardine, the Skill Development Co-ordinator, Northern region, reports the completion of 2 ONA's: the first in the manufacturing sector and the second in transportation.

During the recent fiscal year, instructors provided essential skills programs to 7 sites in the health care sector.

Northern/Strait Region also saw projects funded through the One Journey program as well as the Workforce Development programs.

With an eye to the 2007-2008 year, various programs are being considered for sites in Pictou and Guysborough as part of the Older Worker program along with the development of a mentorship process and a small business program.

Welcome New Members

AWENS continues to grow, and we are excited to add twenty-six new members to our roster. They bring a broad array of skills and experiences to our organization and to workplace education for the people of Nova Scotia.

Cape Breton Region

H. Ronald MacLean
Leslee Nicholson

Central Region

Malcolm (Jeff) Brown

Metro Region

Tommy Boutilier
Tanya Burke
Shaun Gentile
Linda Little
Cathie Panteluk
Juanita MacDonald

Dale Kehler
Scott Furlotte
Sherree Hamilton

Northern/Strait Region

Paula Arsenault
Darlene Jones
Barb Moreton
Laura Lee Pentz
Teresa Morris

Southwestern Region

Pauline d'Entremont
Julie Gilvear

Resources

<http://library.nald.ca/search?q=Leslie+Childs&collection=learning>

These 18 modules were designed to accompany the self-directed adult upgrading program in New Brunswick, but they are equally effective in any essential skills setting. Covering topics like the writing process, report writing, basic grammar, spelling, resumes/cover letters, they are written at an accessible level and provide lots of explanations, examples, exercises and answer keys.

<http://www.sense-lang.org/typing>
free touch typing lessons online

www.howstuffworks.com

Explanations of all things mechanical. This website presents great graphics and explanations for everything from hard drives to toasters to cockroaches and autism. Lots of good links. An excellent resource for learners and instructors.

www.wikipedia.com

Constantly evolving encyclopedia whose accuracy is maintained by the many people who read and edit its entries

www.webopedia.com

Encyclopedia of all things to do with computers. Wondering about DRAM or video drivers? This is the site that answers all your questions in easy to understand language.

www.peterursbender.com

Free personality test that can be related to Myers Briggs are offered on this site. Working with any group of learners always involves building communication skills and these, in turn, are related to personalities. This site gives you and your learners an opportunity to assess your strengths and opportunities for change as well as offering strategies for interacting successfully with those whose styles are different from yours.

www.cognitive-labs.com/qwerty-warriors.swf

This site offers a variety of activities related to improving keyboarding skills. Starts off “easy” and moves on to “impossible goals”. Ginny Schultz from the Valley Region recommends this site highly and says she finds it helpful.

http://www.ket.org/enterprise/work/workplace.htm

This site by PBS offers lots of great learner resources, especially free GED stuff for those learners who want to pursue this avenue after completing an essential skills program with workplace education. You can get 3 free sample videos by calling. Looks like good stuff

http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=f2754fbf-65ac-4f70-8164-6420363c092d&k=69314 "Classroom Controversies"

http://www.ket.org/enterprise/work/workplace.htm

PBS based learner materials...lots of GED support. Some free online GED stuff. You can get 3 free sample videos by calling them.

Submissions, suggestions, and comments are always welcome.

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Your Editorial Board:

- Virginia Schultz
- Pat Thompson
- Margan Dawson
- Leslie Childs

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER:

Deadline

Print Date

April 15, 2008

May 15, 2008

AWENS Objective

The objective of the Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia (AWENS) is: to provide a forum for the promotion and advancement of excellence in instructional practices by networking, creating professional development activities, responding to trends in the field, and representing the interests of educators.

AWENS Mission

To promote excellence in the field of workplace education

AWENS Vision

A strong professional network of partners, supporting workplace education in Nova Scotia

AWENS Values

Collaboration – We value collaboration with all sectors and regions of the province and with our partners at all levels.

Forward Thinking – We value forward thinking and maintain awareness of and are responsive to workplace trends with all our partners.

Support – We value the support of our membership by providing ongoing contact, networking opportunities, and updates.

Commitment – We will take on only those initiatives that fit with our goals, and we will incorporate our values into everything we do.

AWENS Executive Director

Margan Dawson
(902) 835-7949

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LIAISON**

Roger Peters
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Metro Region

Pat Thompson
(902) 876-7535

Alternate: Alison Petten

Southwestern Region

Vacant

Strait Region

Wayne Vacheresse
(902) 752-2588

Alternate: Chris Lewis

Northern Region

Leslie Childs
(902) 667-0208

Valley Region

Fred Ross
(902) 532-7580

Alternate: Joan Ross

In Sympathy

VARDY, Shirley – 48, Bridgewater, passed away peacefully at home on Sunday, October 14th, after a short recurrence of breast cancer. Shirley was employed as an Employer Engagement Navigator, Invest In Youth, at the ACBSE Resource Centre, Bridgewater.