

CRITICAL THINKING

FOR LIFE & WORK

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

A few years ago when I was teaching Communications at one of the Community Colleges in Toronto, I asked the students in my business class what the purpose of advertising was. To my dismay, they said with one voice, "To educate the public." No doubt their business teachers and textbooks encouraged this fantasy. However, if they had submitted

this idea to some critical thinking, the answer might have been quite different. "To create a need among consumers? To sell a product? To make money? To fool the public?" Any of these would have been more accurate than the original answer.

Critical thinking is an essential skill and it should be our constant companion as consumers and as citizens. We need to



protect ourselves from the false promises of advertisers and the spin of today's politicians. What is more, seeing through the lies of advertisers and politicians is necessary if we want to preserve our way of life as a free and democratic society. Critical thinking is our

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GRANTS FOR APPRENTICES

BY ANDREW SUTHERLAND

As part of its Economic Action Plan, the federal government is offering grants to apprentices studying in the Red Seal trades. What's a Red Seal trade? Well, there are over 53 trades in the national Red Seal program. They include hairstylists, bakers, plumbers, roofers, and dozens of other hands-on careers that keep Canada moving. The Red Seal program "represents industry's recognition of an interprovincial standard of excellence for the skilled trades." Simply

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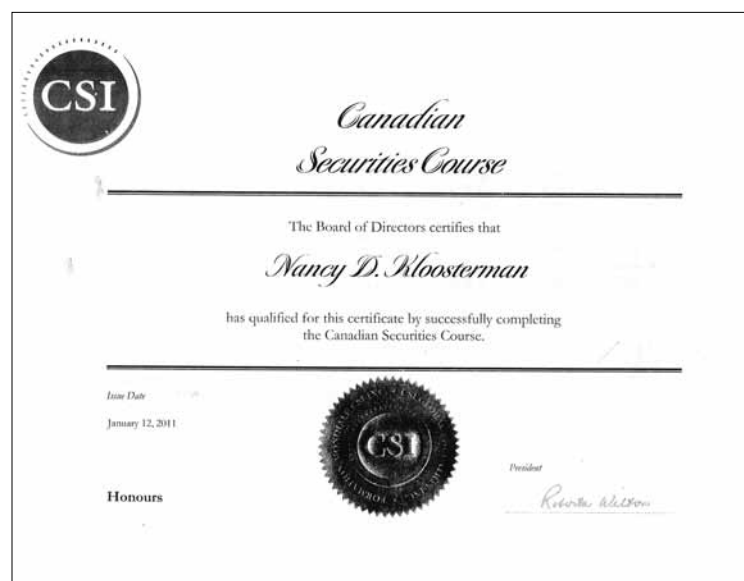
SECOND CHANCE FOR NANCY THROUGH SECOND CAREER

Through Second Career I was given the opportunity to return to school to update my skills. My decision on a program was easy as my passion is Financial Services. As part of the Second Career process I had to investigate several Private Colleges as well as a Public College. The last Private school I visited was Access Business College. I called and arranged to come in for an information meeting with Sonia Nerses the director. I was so impressed with the manner in which Sonia took the time to explain the school's objectives, programs, standards and schedules. I could tell by looking around the classes and offices that they really cared about their students. I walked out of my information meeting at Access College knowing this is where I wanted to attend. I have been in the Banking & Financial

Services Program for six months. Staff & students at Access Business College come from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds, but everyone is like family. If anyone needs anything, someone is there to help them out. We all support and mentor each other. The staff are all very well educated and knowledgeable. The instructors are able to understand and adapt to individual student needs and learning styles. Going into the program I was very motivated and excited about the program. This has not changed. I am so thankful for this opportunity and hope to be able to mentor others in future endeavours.

Regards,

Nancy Kloosterman





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WRITING AN ENGAGING PRESENTATION

BY LESLEY CARLBERG

So. You'd like to write an entertaining presentation. Or maybe you'd just like to write a more engaging one. Truth is, you just don't want people to fall asleep when you actually give your presentation. Here are a few words of advice as you prepare your presentation.

First, the fewer words you use, the more energy your speech will have. And not only fewer words, fewer syllables as well. English is a very muscular language so that we don't always need extra descriptive words like adverbs. For example, count the nine beats, "Joe walked very quickly to the store." Now pared down to six, "Joe bolted to the store." Be direct with fewer beats for a robust speech.

Next, surprise your listeners with a fun word that they aren't expecting. Get a thesaurus and find more descriptive words than the drib drab ones you hear all the time. Don't be afraid to make up words; you're allowed to be silly sometimes. Have fun! People LOVE hearing new things, new ideas and new words (because we all know everything else, don't we)

Another thing about writing funny is the importance of the actual structure of the paragraph. Even more important is the structure of each sentence. And

most important is the choice of the last word. Here's the set-up: build the ideas, piling on the details and then surprise your audience at the end when they are ready to laugh. If you do not follow this pattern, you will likely dilute the laugh potential. At the Funny Spot, people want to laugh but hesitate because they still hear you talking. So make the last sentence of the paragraph and the last word of the last sentence, the "Kicker," then pause and wait for the big yuks.

Finally, don't try too hard. You don't want to be corny. (Well, you're allowed to be a little corny.) Funny flits from a variety of organic places: your information, the structure of your paragraphs and sentences your choice of words and your stellar delivery. You want to be natural, appearing spontaneous with sparks of brilliance.

Have confidence! Punch up your speech following my directions and people will be engaged, stay awake and maybe even laugh!

Comedian Lesley Carlberg is a real estate agent in the west end currently writing her fourth musical comedy and also her first book called "How I Lost One Pound."



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FINDING LIBERAL ARTS COURSES

By Wendy Terry

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities requires all full time college students to take four to six general education courses, often liberal arts courses, because these courses contribute to “the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and who, as a result are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively and positively, to the society in which they live and work.” (Sheridan College calendar

Let’s say you want to take a liberal arts course. Where do you start looking for courses? When you find them, how do you make a choice among so many offerings? Do you meet admission criteria, or are there other ways you can qualify? Where do you register? This article will help you answer these questions. You will learn how to negotiate your way into the university courses as well as the college courses. This article will also highlight courses of special interest to newcomers, retired boomers and anyone wanting to update their world view in the global, multicultural labour market.

UNIVERSITIES

Universities offer many liberal arts courses through their arts faculties. At the University of Toronto, this department is called the Faculty of Arts and Science; at York University it is called the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. The many courses that are offered in the evenings are indicated in the calendars.

At Ryerson numerous evening courses are offered through the G.Raymond Chang School for Continuing Education. At the University of Toronto, the School of Continuing Studies also offers some evening courses in the liberal arts.

However if you take a course through the arts faculty at either U of T or York, you must apply as a “non-degree” student, and yet you must meet admission criteria. But don’t be intimidated by this requirement. The equivalent in work experience or

related education is often accepted for admission. Even education from other countries can be used; however, you must ask the admissions people to approve your alternative qualifications. If you get the approval, you won’t have to dig up Grade 12 or Grade 13 transcripts from 45 years ago.

If you really do not have Grade 12, prior post-secondary education, or related work experience, you are eligible for the Academic Bridging program at Woodsworth College at the University of Toronto or for the Pre-University Studies in the Division of Continuing Education of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies at York. If you attain a certain score in one of these programs, you can earn a university credit and admission to a university program.

On the other hand, Ryerson’s Chang School for Continuing Education and the University of Toronto’s School of Continuing Studies have open admissions. Trent University, which specializes in liberal arts programming, offers courses at its Oshawa campus

As you scan university calendars, you may find courses of interest to you under such subject areas as: Aboriginal Studies, Anthropology, the Classics, East Asian Studies, Economics, English Literature, Art History, Latin American Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Music Appreciation, Psychology, Religion, Slavic Literature, or Sociology. (These subject headings are used by the University of Toronto.)

Admissions and registration for adult students at the University of Toronto begin on the second floor of Woodsworth College, just south of Bloor on St. George Street. For York University, the admissions office for the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies is in the Ross building on the main York campus at Finch and Keele.

The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education is located just to the west of the Dundas subway station on Victoria Street. However, there is no longer a print calendar, so you cannot sit down with a cup of tea and flip through the calendar;

you need to curl up with your laptop. Just opposite Woodsworth College on St. George Street is the School of Continuing Studies.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Although the colleges teach skills, they all have a general and liberal arts program

All the colleges in Toronto and the GTA: George Brown, Seneca, Centennial, Humber, Sheridan, Durham offer a number of liberal arts courses through their Part-time or Continuing Education programs at night or on the weekends. Most courses have open admissions. The best part is that the cost is about one-third that of a university course. And the classes are smaller than the large lecture halls of universities.

Humber College’s Continuing Education Calendar lists these courses under the heading: Liberal Arts and Sciences: Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Geography, Philosophy, Political Science, History, and English.

For ESL students, Humber CE has special courses under English: ESL Literature, an Introduction; Humanities: ESL Humanities, an Introduction to Arts and Science: Sociology: ESL Canadian Society and Culture:

Humber has a number of certificate programs in the liberal arts, one of which is an Intercultural Relations Certificate.

Seneca College lists liberal arts courses in its Part-Time Studies Calendar under General Education. Here there are numerous courses in English Literature. Under Cultural Studies there are courses in the Humanities, Philosophy etc.

Centennial College lists its liberal arts courses in the Continuing Education Calendar under General Education. There are several courses in psychology and sociology. One of Centennial’s most interesting courses is Global Citizenship.

George Brown College actually lists these courses under Liberal Arts in its Continuing Education Calendar. There is a group of courses under Humanities and Social Sciences. Here you can find the course, Cultural

Approaches to Health Care and Healing. For those working or looking to work in health care and health care administration, this one sounds like a good investment.

Sheridan lists liberal arts course under Education and Liberal Studies in its Continuing Education Calendar. Durham College offers courses in psychology, history and sociology through Distance Education, that is, online learning, which is a much wider world of opportunity for liberal arts learning.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Each college calendar has a section which lists their Distance Education offerings. Discussion and debate associated with liberal arts learning takes place in an on-line community rather than in the classroom. You are not limited to the colleges in Toronto and the GTA. Check out the website www.ontariolearn.com which enables you to access online courses from colleges across Ontario.

Similarly university calendars will indicate if a course is offered in class or online, but you are not limited to the universities in Ontario. Canadian Virtual University gives you access to courses across Canada. Athabasca U is one of our favourites, as Jeff Taylor the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences there, has written a book, *Union Learning*, on the history of the WEA of Canada, publisher of Learning Curves.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Once you get hooked on the Humanities and Social Sciences, there will never be enough time to take all the courses that interest you. These courses will lead you to a wider world of courses in the community. The Royal Ontario Museum, the Ontario Art Gallery, the Ontario Science Centre, the Royal Conservatory of Music all offer general interest courses. Then there is your local library, the History Channel, the Documentary Channel, TVOntario...

Liberal arts enrich your life!.

See article on Drummond Wren in this issue to gain some historical perspective on liberal arts learning in Canada.

CANADIAN BUSINESS COLLEGE CAREER CHANGE PROGRAMS

BY WENDY TERRY

Recently I visited Mazher Jaffery, who founded Canadian Business College in 1992. After this visit, three words came to mind: accessibility, connectedness and career advancement.

Canadian Business College has three campuses, each in the city centres of Toronto, Scarborough and Mississauga, right on the transportation hubs for each. Mazher is committed to making his college easily accessible to busy professionals by public transportation. Career colleges are connected to certification bodies for their professions in Ontario.

Canadian Business College is connected to these but also to a much broader community. Mazher is an active member of the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto; is the Government relations representative for the Ontario Association of Career Colleges and was the business representative on the Toronto

Training and Adjustment Board. Through these organizations, he stays in touch with, the needs of Torontonians and their community agencies, with government programs to support adults, and with the broader education community in Toronto.

Furthermore, Canadian Business College programs are connected to the international community a big advantage in the multicultural GTA and global economy. CBC’s Law Clerk Diploma program has articulation agreements with the University of London. CBC law clerk graduates can apply for the LLB or LLM program at this University as can CBC Business Management and E Business Administration apply for the MBA program at this university. In fact, CBC graduates can save four years by not having to take an undergraduate degree.

CBC delivers on-line courses for Harvard Business School to help managers develop leadership skills.

Transfer credit agreements are in place with other American universities like the Medgar Evans College of the City University of New York. Closer to home CBC has transfer agreements with Loyalist College in Bellville Ontario.

There is a clear sense of the teacher–student connection in the school’s lay out. As you get off the elevator, glass panels open on to the reception area and those glass panels open on to the student lab area. You can see adults working away on their computers. When Mazher showed me around the school, each teacher’s office is glass paneled so you can easily make contact, each classroom is glass paneled so you see the students meeting with their teachers around a circular table. No desks with the teacher at the front; he/she is part of the class sitting around a table.

Career advancement is a clear priority for CBC’s programs. Mazher explained how internationally trained lawyers

could use the Law Clerks Diploma program and the College’s connection with London University to develop a career in legal work in Canada. I was interested as I had written an article on this subject in the March/April 2009 issue of Learning Curves. He understood the labour market, the creative paths learners need to take to reach their goals. Later, reading through the College’s calendar I saw that CBC understood that this was necessary for all their programs. Labour market information in relation to each program was clearly written out.

On the way out, I chatted to one of the students just graduating from the Digital Media program who felt a little nervous, but now ready to find a job. Like most adult learners, her courses had changed her prospects.

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Wednesday, April 20	The Growing Gap Between the Rich and the Poor	KEN REA: A leading Canadian economist who takes on the big issues
Wednesday, May 4	Lying Now and Then: The limits of telling the truth	ANDRE GOMBAY: One of Canada's best known philosophers deals with the issues of everyday life
Wednesday, May 18	How Democratic is Russia after the Fall of Communism?	METTA SPENCER: A sociologist and one of Canada's most astute observers of Russian politics
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Since 2002 the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and its partners have taken the opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of creating a culture of learning where all are able to participate in the knowledge society

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support and promote IALW on a regional basis. These organizations include:

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- Alpha Plus www.alphaplus.ca/
- City of Toronto Employment and Social Services www.toronto.ca/socialservices/
- Consolidated Credit Counseling Services of Canada www.consolidatedcredit.ca/
- Frontier College www.frontiercollege.ca/
- Independent Learning Centre www.ilc.org/
- Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy www.mtml.ca/
- Ontario Literacy Coalition www.on.literacy.ca/
- Ontario Native Literacy Coalition
- Toronto Adult Student Association www.tasa2000.com/

The Toronto Adult Student Association was instrumental in the founding of International Adult Learners' Week in Canada and around the world. To join TASA call or visit the TASA website.(See above list)

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CRITICAL THINKING FOR LIFE & WORK

By Anne McDonagh

Continued from page 1

weapon, but we must learn how to use it.

Critical thinking is not just seeing what is wrong with statements made by advertisers or politicians. It is a way of thinking that does not come naturally to us. Among other qualities critical thinking requires us to be reasonable and logical, unbiased and tolerant, well-informed and open to new ideas. A critical thinker considers the credibility of sources, examines assumptions and evidence. A critical thinker can develop and defend a logical opinion, devise convincing hypotheses and draw clearly reasoned, sound conclusions.

The absence of critical thinking among many people should be of concern to all of us who care about the world we live in. The lack of civil discourse and unashamed ignorance and bigotry of the Tea Party movement in the United States is an extreme example of the lack of critical thinking.

We Canadians are not a whole lot better. Remember the coalition formed by the Liberals and NDP with support from the Bloc which might have defeated the Harper government? There was plenty to criticize in this coalition, but Mr. Harper and his caucus claimed it was anti-democratic, which it was not, and many of us fell for it. We Canadians don't care enough about how we are governed to know a coalition government is quite common, democratic and legal in parliamentary democracies as is the case right now in Great Britain. In their push to lower civil discourse in Canada, the Tories continue to refer disparagingly to the Liberals and the NDP as the Coalition. This is a small example of how we are led astray if we do not intentionally pay attention to what our politicians are doing and saying and if we do not care enough about how we are governed. And we are all victims, usually without realizing it, of advertising. The cost of sneakers is outrageous—especially as many are made by cheap labour in Asian sweatshops—but we pay the price because of the brand name. Ads appeal to our desire for status, for romance, for success, for all sorts of things that have nothing to do with the product.

Advertisers and politicians use buzz words to manipulate us. As a critical thinker your lie-detecting radar should go on high alert when you hear politicians talking about “hard working families” when they talk about services they may or may not have performed for “ordinary people”, like giving \$100 dollars a month to families instead of the far more useful universal daycare; or accusing their opponents of being “tax and spend” advocates; or “our brave men and women in uniform” whenever doubts about war or the military are raised.

Critical thinking is one way to see through all this duplicity thrown at us on a daily basis.

On the whole critical thinking is a skill more likely to be developed by a Liberal Arts education than by a professional, vocational or technical program which emphasizes training in practical skills; for example, engineering, dentistry, various technology programs etc. According to Wikipedia “the term Liberal Arts denotes a curriculum that imparts general knowledge

and develops the student's rational thought and intellectual capabilities. The contemporary Liberal Arts include the study of literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics, and science.”

In Liberal Arts courses students learn and practise many skills. For example, the writing of essays, a large component of any Liberal Arts program, requires you to think clearly and write correctly. You have to develop hypotheses, defend your ideas and draw conclusions. Similarly, in tutorials you are expected to present and defend your well-researched information in a clear and logical manner.

Good scientists learn to be logical and impartial in their pursuits—both integral aspects of critical thinking. The Scientific Method, which has been largely responsible for our understanding of the natural world and is the hallmark of our civilization, is the ultimate example of critical thinking.

In the study of philosophy, you have to free your mind of preconceived ideas. One of the most important components of philosophy is ethics. The topic is approached logically and impartially. You examine many schools of thought regarding what is moral or ethical, i.e., what constitutes a good life. (The CEOs and other executives of the corporations that caused the economic crisis of the last two years might benefit from a course in ethics.)

History gives students perspective on their own culture. They learn that their own society is just one of many that have flourished and fallen. This perspective develops tolerance for differences, a quality necessary in our globalized world and an appetite for innovation, a quality necessary for our economy to survive. The study of languages and literature creates an appreciation of other cultures much as the study of history does.

There are other reasons to cultivate skills in critical thinking apart from protecting ourselves from the manipulations of advertisers and politicians. Now more than ever critical thinking is increasingly valued in the workplace. The value of employees who are fair, ethical, tolerant, well-informed, can think on their feet, and can see the likely long-term effects of a policy is incalculable.

CONSIDER THESE FIVE STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

- (a) **What am I being asked to believe or accept? What is the hypothesis?**
- (b) **What evidence is available to support the assertion? Is it reliable and valid?**
- (c) **Are there alternative ways of interpreting the evidence?**
- (d) **What additional evidence would help to evaluate the alternatives?**
- (e) **What conclusions are most reasonable based on the evidence and the number of alternative explanations?**

STOP TELLING GENERAL ARTS STUDENTS THEY ARE NOT GOING TO FIND A JOB!

BY SONNY WONG WITH ANDREW CHILTON

The world of work is getting more competitive with inflated credentials required for positions which once required only a high school diploma, with the disappearance of “good” jobs because of offshoring, technology replacing people and so on. Educational and career counselling ought to be introduced at an early stage to ensure clarity when young people transition from high school to university and beyond. It is all too common to hear from some university graduates that their program was so abstract or historically based that they think their degrees are useless because they are working in fields unrelated to their academic training.

Students in general arts programs particularly seem to buy into these unwarranted misconceptions about the worthlessness of their degree. They feel that they will have difficulty finding meaningful employment once they have completed their studies. These students may be experiencing “general arts anxiety.” What am I going to school for? What is this degree going to do for me? I don't know what I am going to do with my life? Can I learn something that will get me a job? These are the questions students in general arts programs deal with and at times these uncertainties consume their university experience. What is worse, their friends and their parents often add fuel to the fire by convincing them to switch to a more “practical” education so that they can get a “good job” rather than use their education to find meaningful work. Neither the parents nor the students see that, during their four years of study, they are developing many employability skills. The debate about the value of a general arts degree versus specific training continues.

Extensive research regarding the employability of the person with the general arts degree versus the person with a technical or vocational degree indicates that the graduate with the technical or vocational degree takes less time to find a job after graduation. But research also shows that those with general arts degrees experience a lower incidence of unemployment in the long term than those with specific degrees. In many ways, a general arts degree equips students with a variety of skills that can be widely applied in the world of work. Thus the general arts graduate has an expanded range of employment options. Students suffering from “general arts anxiety” need to know these facts.

Successfully completing a four-year undergraduate program, whether one studies English literature, philosophy

or sociology should be deemed a career achievement. This achievement is a sign of competence and seriousness. The courses studied help young people develop and demonstrate, for example, effective composition and textual comprehension skills which they can use in the world of work. In other words, university is a training ground. University arts programs teach students how to work efficiently and effectively while under pressure. Employers do not hire and keep employees for the memorized knowledge that they have stored in their heads; they ultimately value and seek out individuals who can think critically, synthesize complex information, and communicate data by packaging it into services and/or products for the end user.

Students often feel that a lot of what they are learning has little relevance outside the world of academia. Students not planning to continue their education after completing their undergraduate studies have the misconception that their “degree” is what employers are mainly concerned with when selecting a candidate.

Arts students need to recognize that many important aspects of a university education are not in the curriculum. Furthermore, what is focused on in the classroom may not constitute everything that any particular undergraduate program has to offer its students. There are countless optional services and volunteer positions that present opportunities to students for personal/social growth and the forming of their career identities. Actively interacting with professors, fellow students, and staff develops strong teamwork skills and professional etiquette. Involvement in volunteerism allows students, who worry about the abstract nature of their subject of study, a chance to gain hands-on experience and networking possibilities, while helping others. Consulting with career counsellors or program directors also offers the general arts students vast opportunities for showcasing their practical skills and abilities.

In short, general arts students may want to think about their undergraduate program as a vehicle for their overall education rather than a finite set of learning objectives and mandatory readings. To dispel the “general arts anxiety” they need to reflect on what they can do with their degree rather than what the degree is going to do for them.

Sonny Wong, M.Ed., is the Faculty of Arts Career Counsellor at Ryerson University. Andrew Chilton is a fourth year Arts and Contemporary Studies student at Ryerson University.

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ALAIN GELINAS: EARNING A BEd IN ADULT EDUCATION

Alain Gelinas is on a mission of his own as he studies full time for a Bachelor of Education (BEd) in Adult Education degree at Brock University.

Most adult education learners, who are pursuing the first degree option of the Brock program, study part time for many years to complete the 15-credit requirements. Gelinas is committed to completing his degree in two and a half years -- applying the kind of discipline that you might expect from a member of Canada's military.

Gelinas has served in the military for close to 20 years. For the past five years, he has been stationed at CFB Borden and has taught and served as administrative personnel with the base's leadership instruction program. Most recently, he was accepted into the very competitive University Training Plan for Non-commissioned Members. The Adult Education degree is his first step in meeting that program's requirements.

Gelinas is among about 420 learners currently enrolled with Brock's Centre for Adult Education and Community Outreach in one of the longest-running adult education degree and certificate programs in the province. The BEd in Adult

Education is unique in Ontario as it offers both first and subsequent degree options.

The University offers learners, who are pursuing a degree or certificate, the option of taking the Adult Education courses online or face-to-face in a classroom of 10 to 12 people in locations across the province including the Greater Toronto Area. On-site classes held in the GTA include college campuses of Seneca, Humber, Sheridan, Durham and Centennial.

Gelinas began his Brock undergraduate career last September and registered for four courses. He took an apartment in St. Catharines where he stays Tuesday to Saturday. He travels back to his home in Angus, Ontario to spend weekends with his wife and 17-year-old son.

"I had an idea of the amount of workload that would be involved," he said during the December exam period. "Still, I wondered if I could do it all and after living through the fall semester, I know I can do it."

"You have to make it your priority day-to-day, no different than a job. From six in the morning through to five in the afternoon I'm studying or going to my classes. I spend half a day on the weekend as well. It's what

you have to do to make it work."

In the fall term, Gelinas took the first of the program's five core courses, ADED 4F31 Foundations of Adult Education, as part of a Brock class that met every Saturday at the St. Catharines campus with facilitator Dan Matkowski.

"It was a great group," he says. "You get to know people of very different backgrounds who bring many different ideas. That really opens your mind. I enjoyed the way the class was run with the facilitator overseeing discussions to keep things going on track."

The other core courses are: Facilitation of Adult Learning Pedagogies, Curriculum Design for Adult Learners, Work and Learning in Organizations, and Research and Critical Reflection in Adult Education.

Gelinas also took one of a growing number of Adult Education elective courses, ADED 4P93 Adult Education in the Global Context, that was available to study online.

He's candid about the experience of combining the two delivery modes, saying the classroom-based course is more suited to his preference for a learning experience.

As an educator of adults, Gelinas says that what attracted him most to the field of adult training was that he could use the learners' life experiences to re-enforce theories and concepts.

"I enjoy using class discussions to challenge the way learners think and understand how certain things affect their work and life in general," he says.

To find out more about pursuing a degree or certificate in Adult Education through Brock University in fall 2011, please visit www.brocku.ca/education/futurestudents/adulted

GRANTS FOR APPRENTICES

BY ANDREW SUTHERLAND CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

put, it ensures that provincial and territorial apprenticeship and certification programs all meet the same standards of quality.

The federal government started the apprenticeship grant program to, "make a career in the trades an attractive choice and encourage more apprentices to complete their training." The grants are designed to help apprentices cover expenses such as the purchase of tools and other materials required for learning on the job, as well as cover travel expenses associated with classroom training. Depending on where you are in your apprenticeship, there are two different grants available, and eligible applicants could receive up to \$4,000 total. Before you apply though, it's important to make sure that you're eligible.

Apprenticeship Incentive Grant

Registered apprentices who have successfully finished their first or second year/level in any Red Seal trade can apply for the apprenticeship incentive grant (AIG), which is a taxable cash grant of \$1,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$2,000 for two years. The incentive grant program is open to Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and protected persons. It's not open to high school students, but those enrolled in adult learning or professional upgrading classes aren't considered high school students.

You must be registered as an apprentice with an employer, training trust fund, union training centre, joint apprenticeship training committee or apprenticeship authority. You must be able to provide documents indicating

you have successfully completed the first or second year/level within an eligible apprenticeship program. Finally you must file the application by June 30 of the calendar year following the date you completed the year/level for which you are applying. So if you finish anywhere between January 1 and December 31 of 2011, your application must be received by the apprenticeship grant processing centre by June 30, 2012. According to Service Canada the most common reason AIG applications get rejected is because of missing proof of progression. Service Canada recommends you immediately mail your supporting documents to an Apprenticeship Grant-Processing Centre, or deliver them to a Service Canada Centre as soon as you complete your application. In Ontario, you will need to copy both sides of the registration wallet card to show proof of registration, and provide a copy of the official Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in-school training letter to demonstrate progression.

Apprenticeship Completion Grant

Registered apprentices who have successfully completed their apprenticeship training and obtained their journey person certification in a designated Red Seal trade on or after January 1, 2009 are eligible for up to \$2,000. The Apprenticeship Completion Grant (ACG) is available to Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and protected persons. Much like the AIG, applications are due no later than June 30 of the calendar year following the

date you completed your apprenticeship, so if you completed your apprenticeship between January 1 and December 31, 2010, you have until June 30, 2011 to apply.

It's important to ensure you deliver your proof of completion or certification to either a Service Canada Centre near you, or mail it to the Apprenticeship Grant Processing Centre.

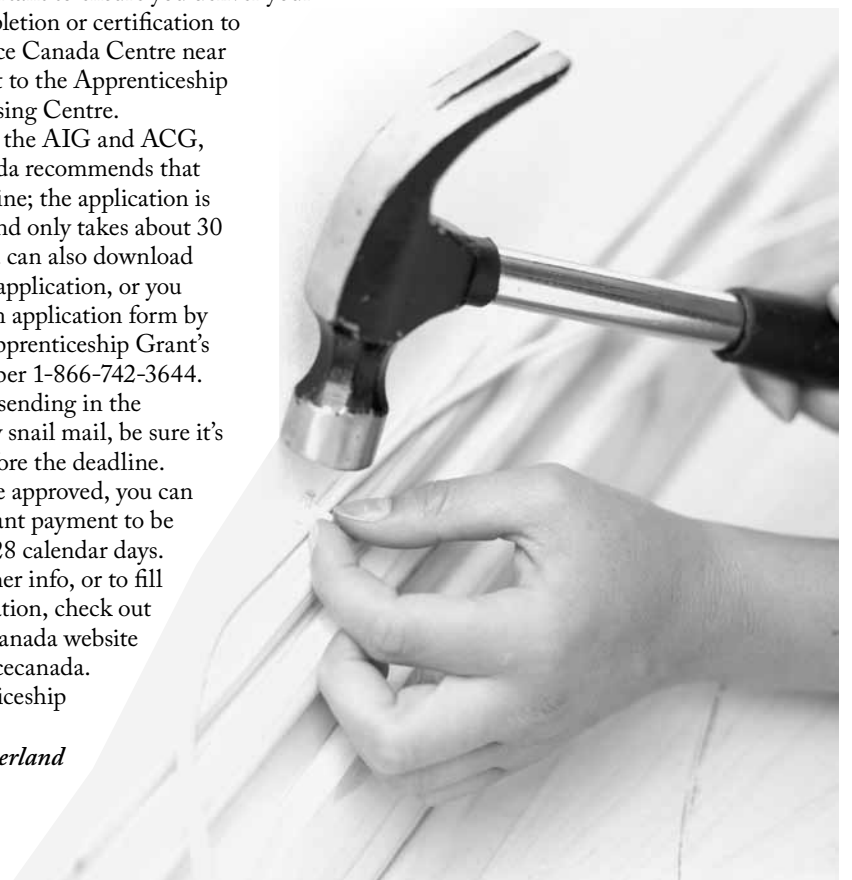
For both the AIG and ACG, Service Canada recommends that you apply online; the application is easy, secure and only takes about 30 minutes. You can also download a copy of the application, or you can request an application form by calling the Apprenticeship Grant's toll-free number 1-866-742-3644.

If you're sending in the application by snail mail, be sure it's postdated before the deadline.

If you are approved, you can expect the grant payment to be processed in 28 calendar days.

For further info, or to fill out an application, check out the Service Canada website at www.servicecanada.gc.ca/apprenticeship

Andrew Sutherland is a freelance journalist.



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4

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Illustrations by Alan Bunce. Idioms and definitions taken from "If I'm so smart, why do I feel like an IDIOT?" by Marlene Paglia, available at ESL Shop.

SERVING UP INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES!

ESL Shop, located just South of Dundas West subway station, has been committed to helping newcomers and English language teachers since opening its doors almost six years ago. Recently heads have been turning as passers-by notice the brightly coloured signs in the window advertising all the other languages available. Owner Cheryl McCarron explains, "We've always wanted to support newcomers as they learn English, as well as their teachers. But we love the multi-lingual, multiculturalism of our city and want to support that by having other language learning materials available as well."

McCarron, herself a teacher of both French and English who also speaks a bit of Japanese, got the idea when she noticed more and more parents stopping in looking for additional resources for their kids in French immersion. Since there isn't really an easy go-to for French language materials in our neighbourhood, we thought—why don't we build a collection of French materials? Then, why stop there, many people drop in looking for resources to help them learn international languages. Whether it is a teacher preparing to go overseas or Canadians of international descent

wanting to remain or become proficient in their family's first language.

What really makes ESL Shop's International Languages collection interesting is the variety of other languages available. Want to learn modern Hebrew? Serbian? Swahili? Greek? Catalan? ESL Shop staff can set you up with a self-study language course, or even help you find a teacher or a language exchange through their online forum, TeacherFind.

The most recent project at ESL Shop is a newly renovated classroom located adjacent to the store. The space is brightly painted with murals above whiteboards which run the full width of the classroom. McCarron explains, "We're going to run language classes here, initially twice a week with English and Spanish classes. Any teacher who wants to use the space for group classes or private lessons can rent the space and we can help them find students."

Drop by ESL Shop Tuesday to Friday from noon until 7:00 pm and on Saturdays from 12:00 until 5:00 to browse resources, check out the classroom, and learn how we can help you with your language learning goals.

IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED...

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

Do you know that in Ontario there is an Employment Centre no further than five kilometers from any Ontario resident? Do you know that anyone who is unemployed can make use of the Employment Centre in his/her community? You do not have to fulfill any other conditions—just unemployment. These and other changes have been made by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) which has revamped how it delivers employment programs.

In the past, help in your job search at various centres was a mishmash, not necessarily ineffective but uncoordinated and inconsistent. Not all organizations had all the components needed to help people find work. The changes in the delivery of these employment supports began last August and will be complete by the end of March. Some Centres had to be renovated and new or different staff had to be hired. Now every Employment Centre will offer help in all the components of the job search. It's called one-stop shopping. At the same time these places are client-centred; the goal is to give you the help you need and not help you don't need.

I interviewed Randy Heasman, the manager of Employment and Training for St. Stephen's Community House, a large social service agency in downtown Toronto. St. Stephen's was one of the Centres chosen to become a full-service Employment Centre. I assume that what St. Stephen's is doing now for its clients will be similar to what all the other Centres are now doing. After all that has been the purpose of these changes—to make employment services consistent throughout Ontario.

I asked Randy how a new person walking into the Centre for the first time would be treated. What follows is the process Randy outlined for me.

When you come into the Centre for the first time, a counselor will welcome you

and sit down with you to do a brief needs assessment. By asking a few questions the counselor will recommend one of three paths.

The first path is for people who know what they want to do next. What they need is access to information, tools and support to implement their plan. They need to use some of the resources available at the Centre like computers, faxes etc., but they know what they are doing and do not need a lot of support from counselors. They just get on with it.

The second path is for people who are not sure what to do next and they want to sit down with someone to develop a plan—perhaps to enhance their skills—and fulfill the plan through one on one support. They will be referred to a career counselor who will help them work out the plan whether it is to get a job right away or to get further training before looking for work.

The third path—the job development path—is for those who need more support entering or re-entering the job market. They may have been out of the work force for a number of years raising children, for example, or perhaps they have worked for many years in an industry that has left town and they are left with no job and no knowledge of how to find a job. These clients will get support from both career counselors and job developers.

All the Employment Centres have teams of career counselors and job developers. How many depends upon the needs of the community. If there are many in the community who have been unemployed for years, the Centre will need more job developers. On the other hand, a more middle class community might need more career counselors than job developers.

It sounds as if it could work. Randy says it does.

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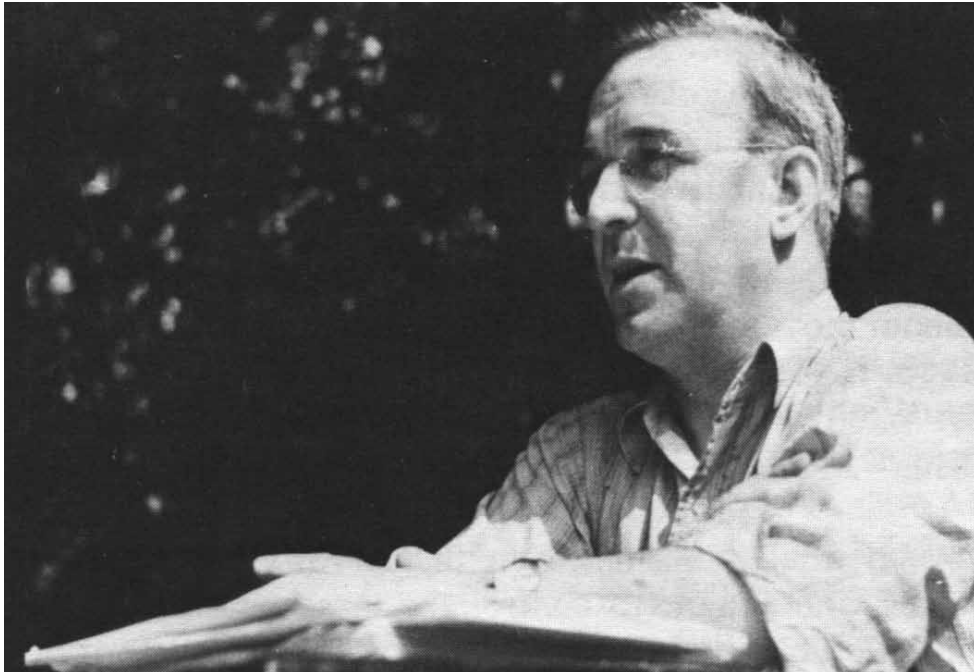
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DRUMMOND WREN, HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE, INNOVATOR IN LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION FOR ALL, MARTYR

BY WENDY TERRY



In St. James Cemetery, in Common Burial Plot C113, lie the ashes of Drummond Wren. How sad that this anonymous grave site is the last resting place of the man who changed Canada's human rights history and transformed the lives of adults who took WEA classes in the 1930 and 1940's. Unfairly persecuted by the anti-communist fanatics of the time, his life has been unsung. This article will sing his song.

Drummond Wren was the General Secretary of the Workers' Educational Association of Canada (WEA) from 1929 to 1951. The WEA is a charitable organization that publishes this paper, Learning Curves, and is a partner in University in the Community, www.weacanda.ca. The WEA was founded in 1918 in Canada based on the British WEA model, which offered a university education to working people. Drummond Wren first joined the WEA to take classes himself after returning from the First World War (He was one of those young men who lied about his age in order to serve in the armed forces.)

Human Rights Advocate

If you google Drummond Wren, the legal case he was involved in comes up—not the man, Drummond Wren. This legal case, which changed the human rights of “Jews and others of objectionable nationality” in Canada, is described in a biography of Bora Laskin by Philip Girard of Dalhousie University. (Bora Laskin was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada from 1973 to 1984.) Laskin and Wren became friends and colleagues when Laskin taught for the WEA.

The legal case, referred to above, was about a restrictive covenant on a piece of land that the WEA had bought prohibiting it from being ‘sold to Jews or persons of objectionable nationality.’ Wren and Laskin collaborated on the case, now known as Drummond Wren, to have the covenant declared void, and it was on October 31, 1945 by Justice Keiller McKay. Given our case law legal system, all such covenants then became void. It was an important and courageous achievement

given the anti-Semitism of that time.

Just as Drummond Wren, the case is known as a precedent setting human rights case, we hope that Drummond Wren, the man, will come to be known as one of Canada's historic human rights advocates.

Adult Education Innovator

The innovative role of adult education seen in the WEA classes that Bora Laskin and others taught has been recently chronicled by Jeff Taylor of Athabasca University in his book *Union Learning*. Taylor focuses on the role the WEA played in the development of labour education. But another reading of WEA archives and the history of adult education indicates that many WEA students were primarily seeking a Liberal Arts education at a university level—one that they would not normally be able to afford. Also many of the WEA students were not union members.

Taylor notes that in the 1920's, the WEA was based in Toronto, working in co-operation with university-based educators and trade union leaders to offer university level evening classes. By the mid 1940's the WEA, a fledgling national organization, offered evening classes, study groups, weekend institutes, summer schools, and visual education across Canada. Managing this growth was a challenge and as Taylor noted it was often shaky and haphazard given sporadic funding and dependence on volunteers. Nevertheless due to Wren's determination and creativity the WEA developed many new approaches to adult education and provided a liberal education to those who would not normally get one.

It has been said that the WEA believed in teaching students how to think not what to think, in other words, critical thinking skills as described by Anne McDonagh in her front page article in this issue. Every lecture was followed by a discussion. In addition to the development of a national network of evening classes in urban centres, Wren developed new techniques that would extend the reach of Liberal Arts learning to the unemployed,

those in rural areas and war workers.

Wren became the WEA General Secretary in 1929 just as the Depression was starting. Beginning in 1931, the WEA ran free lectures for the unemployed in co-operation with the Unemployment Educational Association. Historian J.A. Blyth noted that while the lecturer made academic theory relevant to the everyday lives of unemployed students, the lecturer received a liberal education from the students. The WEA summer school, begun in 1932, offered a “holiday with a purpose,” with guest lecturers like Sir Fredrick Banting and Harold Innis.

Bringing Liberal Arts learning to adults who were geographically isolated was one of Wren's innovative achievements and much needed in a country like Canada. Today distance education uses computers as the medium; for the WEA it was the radio. In 1936 Wren founded the Agricola Study Club. The WEA prepared and distributed written lectures and discussion guides, which students used to form their own study groups. By the early 1940's the Study Club had over 10,000 members in 29 towns across Canada.

In 1937 the CBC gave the WEA a 30 minute program on Saturday evenings which was called the WEA Farm Forum, broadcast from Winnipeg, Toronto and Halifax. Roger Schwass in his doctoral thesis noted that the WEA Farm Forum established the discussion formats used later in the Canadian Association for Adult Education's National Farm Radio Forum. In 1940, Wren used film strips to start off a student-organized discussion group. Again workers who were isolated used this WEA film library on topics such as Canadian Social History as a basis for a discussion group.

During the war years, programs were developed to bring education to Canada's war workers. The National Labour Forum was started in 1942. Each week up to 100,000 listeners tuned into programs where labour leaders, professors, government officials and everyday workers discussed economic issues. The WEA booklet, *Labour Forum Facts*, was used by listener groups to discuss the evening's topic.

In 1942 the WEA Summer School found a permanent home in Port Hope. In the first year, 81 labour leaders met with the Director of National Selective Service at Port Hope. This meeting was considered the beginning of a spirit of co-operation between labour and government during the war years.

Today in Port Hope you can visit the building that housed the summer school, now Molson's Mill on the Ganarasa River. Recently I ran into Alice Wiess a former student of the WEA Summer School, who remembered Wren as a fascinating teacher. She glowed as she told me about her classes as all students do who have been awakened by a charismatic teacher and an engaging course.

While Wren was developing these educational innovations for the unemployed, rural residents and war workers with a few grants from Government, he was also establishing

branches in every major Canadian city.

Martyred

Despite Wren's success for over two decades in creating, developing and promoting the WEA courses, he felt forced to resign in March 1951. He was persecuted in a perfect storm of anti-communist hysteria that characterized the post war years. Taylor notes, “The WEA ... became identified and denounced as communist because of the company it sometimes kept.” Moreover, with the subsequent decline of the WEA, Canada lost the possibility of a Liberal Arts education for all in Canada. In other countries where the WEA survived and thrived, adults from disadvantaged backgrounds can today walk into their local community run learning centre and take courses that help them to understand themselves and their world. That this option is not part of Canada's educational culture is a loss not only to individuals but to Canadian society.

Henry Milner, a Canadian political scientist, in his book, *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work*, determined that adult and civic education enabled welfare states to survive and adapt. His role model was Sweden, where today the ABF (the Worker's Educational Association) runs 100,000 study circles a year for a million participants who are least likely to participate in adult education. Milner notes that “there is good reason to believe that, when it comes to civic literacy the content of what is learned as an adult is more important than that learned in school in one's youth.” With Wren's resignation, Canada lost the kind of education that Liberal Arts brings to civil society, and we are the poorer for its absence.

WEA learning was Wren's passion. But he resigned in 1951 in hopes that by sacrificing himself he could save the WEA from being unfairly maligned. In his resignation speech, in page after page, he listed the summer schools, the radio programs, the study groups, the branches all across Canada and the support of the students. The emotion crackles off the page; his heart was breaking.

Wren's Legacy

Drummond Wren made Canada a more just place, helped hundreds of thousands of adults get a university Liberal Arts education who would never have had a chance to do so otherwise and suffered great injustice with grace. We hope in future years his contributions will be acknowledged and lauded.

After his resignation, Wren worked as a labour arbitrator. WEA loyalists kept the WEA alive. I became the director in 1984. Today the WEA is a partner in University in the Community with the University of Toronto, a program that brings Liberal Arts learning to those who otherwise could not afford such learning—about 90 students a year. We hope this time, Liberal Arts learning for all takes hold in Canada, for if we are to become global citizens, we all must think, question, reflect and grow.

MEMORABLE QUOTATIONS ON A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think we become."

Buddha

It is not so very important for a person to learn facts. For that he does not really need a college. He can learn them from books. The value of an education at a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks."

Albert Einstein

I think most of us sense that it is a responsibility of the humanities to try to help better the conduct of human beings in their lives and manifold professional activities.

J. Irwin Miller

The notion that every well educated person would have a mastery of at least the basic elements of the humanities, sciences, and social sciences is a far cry from the specialized education that most students today receive, particularly in the research universities.

Joseph E. Stiglitz

The adequate study of culture, our own and those on the opposite side of the globe, can press on to fulfillment only as we learn today from the humanities as well as from the sciences.

Ruth Benedict

The calling of the humanities is to make us truly human in the best sense of the word.

J. Irwin Miller

The humanities need to be defended today against the encroachments of physical science, as they once needed to be against the encroachment of theology.

Irving Babbitt

The most important function of education at any level is to develop the personality of the individual and the significance of his life to himself and to others

Grayson Kirk

You are educated. Your certification is in your degree. You may think of it as the ticket to the good life. Let me ask you to think of an alternative. Think of it as your ticket to change the world.

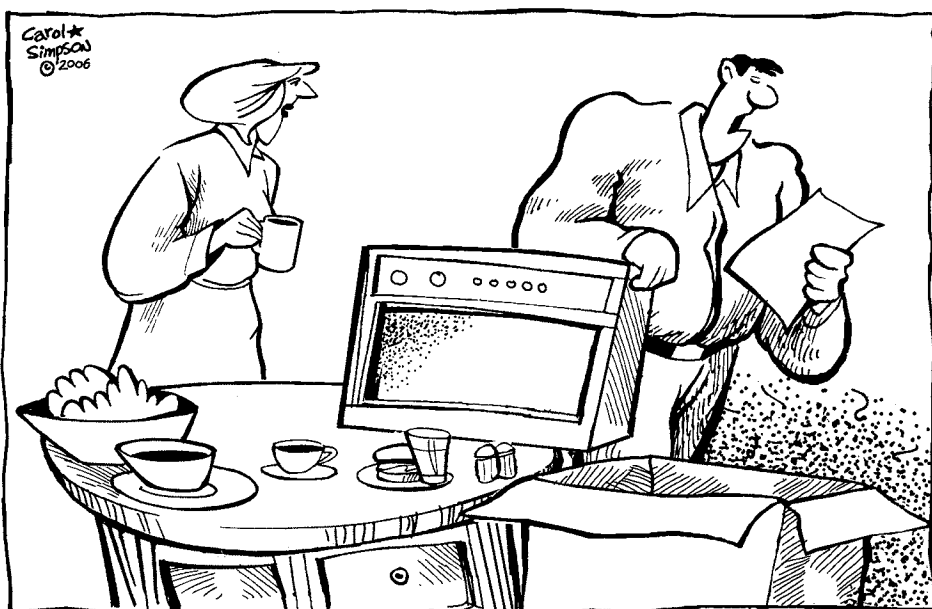
Tom Brokaw

Education is what remains when we have forgotten all that we have been taught

George Savile

All wish to possess knowledge, but few, comparatively speaking, are willing to pay the price.

Juvenal



"It's a message from the worker who assembled our microwave... Working for tips. Please send one."

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The WEA Donate Button

On the opening page of our website www.weacanada.ca is a Donate Button from CanadaHelps which has made donating to a charity easy and secure. CanadaHelps has facilitated over \$100 million in charitable donations through its website since it was launched in 2000.

We publish Learning Curves and are very involved, along with our partners, in University in the Community. We do not receive grants from the government or foundations for Learning Curves although we have had grants from the Trillium Foundation and the Morrow Foundation for University in the Community.

If you think that Learning Curves is a valuable publication, please consider making a donation to the WEA. Since the WEA is a registered charity, you would receive an income tax receipt.

WEACANADA.COM

The WEA needs two new Board members

The Workers' Educational Association, which publishes this paper, Learning Curves, and is a partner in University in the Community, is looking for two new Board members who are committed to lifelong learning. We would like someone with a background or interest in journalism and someone with a background or interest in liberal arts.

Your duties will be:

1. To attend 4 meetings a year
2. Help promote WEA programs to the broader community
3. Contribute ideas around topics such as programming, fund raising etc and help implement them
4. Serve on sub-committees as the need arises.

The WEA has provided almost a century of adult continuing education to Canadians. To learn more about the WEA, go to our website www.weacanada.ca.

WEACANADA.COM

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