COUNTY of INVERNESS

Partici~Paper

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People Helping People

by Mary Anne Ducharme

"No amount of money could by this service we provide for each other, this service of volunteering, helping each other because we want to."

Nicole MacLennan, in her prize-winning essay titled "People Helping People" expressed the keynote of the evening at the April 20th Volunteer Recognition Night. This event, the third annual volunteer ceremony, sponsored by the Department of Recreation and Tourism, was hosted at the Court House in Port Hood.

Forty-one volunteers received plaques and county logo pins. As Recreation Director John Cotton stated, this was a way of saying thank-you to the scores of volunteers in the County who have contributed to the quality of life in our communities.

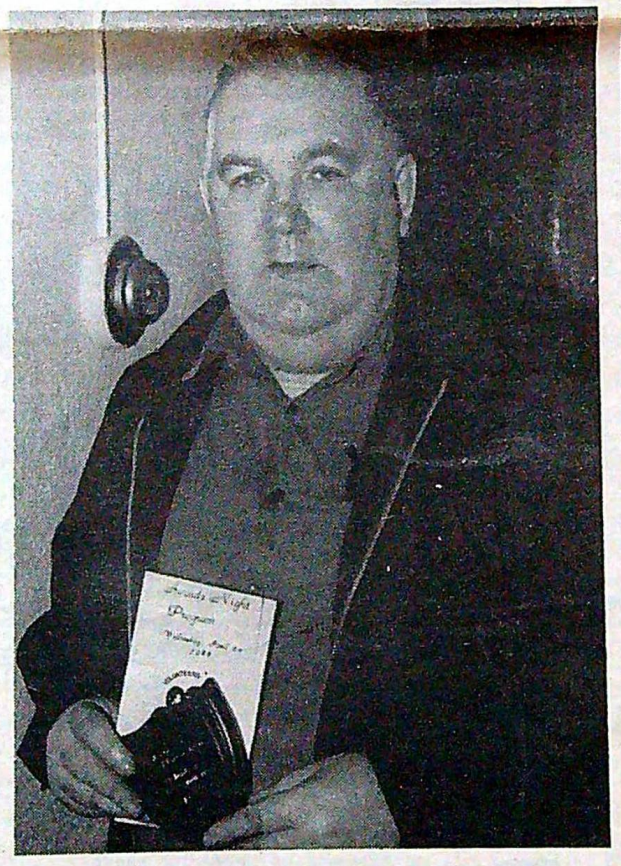
Warden Charles MacArthur expressed his appreciation to those present, recognizing that there is no adequate way to "measure the dollar value of the work and time that volunteers have contributed on behalf of this great County."

Master of Ceremonies, Daniel Rankin, who added his usual flair and humor to the occasion, suggested that long-suffering husbands, who spend countless hours baby-sitting for volunteer wives, should have a special recognition week as well.

Mike MacDougall, guest speaker for the evening, focused on the role of volunteers in our schools. The Whycocomagh School Principal pointed out that almost 80% of the volunteers present were active in some way in school-related activities. "No school can get along without volunteers," he said, stressing the enormous amount of unpaid time spent by many teachers in sports and other extra-curricular activities. Community people who chaperone dances and class trips; who assist in hot lunch programs; who act as teacher-aids in helping students with reading--all of these are indispensible. He also commended PTA members, trustees and board of education members who take on the thankless, demanding job of being diligent guardians over the quality of education in the County.

Maud Hart, who represented County volunteers at the provincial awards ceremony in Halifax, spoke of the pleasure of meeting volunteers from all around the province.

Nicole MacLennan, a Mabou High School student, read her essay on volunteerism, and was presented with a prize of $100. for winning the essay contest sponsored by the Recreation Department. Judging his contest were five members of In-Scribe, a group of Inverness County writers.



Volunteer Awards Night '88

Viewpoint

What is speed reading?

by Mary Anne Ducharme

Would you like to take a Continuing Education class that is not intended to be "fun" and "easy", a class that has no academic credit for GED and that requires out of class homework and practice and considerable concentration? Such a class is SPEED READING, offered in Judique, and attended by six adult students.
The eight week course, if taken seriously, is demanding and the students are rewarded with measurably increased reading rates and improved comprehension. If the course is taken lightly, without the required motivation and out-of-class practice, improvement is marginal or non-existent.

One of the first hurdles to the class is understanding what speed reading ISN'T. It is not something that another person can give like a prescription or a magical formula that produces effortless results. It isn't merely reading faster. It isn't some trick that you do with your eyes, or a form of mental gymnastics only a few gifted readers can master to astound audiences.

This speed reading course aims at the development of personal skills to replace poor reading habits acquired over many years. Anyone, no matter what the personal starting level is, can learn to read more efficiently. As the students are finding, long-ingrained habits are difficult *to break, including vocalization* (lip reading), poor concentration, word by word reading, eye regressions, lack of recognition of main ideas and supporting facts, etc. But once the obstacles are recognized, and new techniques are practiced, some students can increase reading rates by 300%, and improve comprehension and memory--
demonstrated by testing at the end of the course as compared to testing at the beginning.

The students are given a series of timed readings, interspersed with discussions about the reading process and problems encountered. The timed readings are mostly "easy" selections of high interest with a series of questions to check factual comprehension. This in itself was a subject of discussion, for the realization came quickly that reading faster is not always reading better! The fact is that speed reading involves knowing how to suit the reading pace to the purpose of the reading, and that understanding what and why you are reading is every bit as important as the speed. If your comprehension is poor, you are not accomplishing much by reading faster.

Comprehension, the students learn, is a three-level process. The first level, the one most emphasized in this course, is called "literal comprehension" in which the reader can identify and retain details and main ideas. The second level involves "interpretation" in which the reader grasps the organization of the material, the relationships of the ideas, and the realization that some facts are more important than others. The third level, the highest level of comprehension is the creative level in which the reader brings in his own ideas, agrees or disagrees with the material, and applies the ideas to new situations or problems.

The timed readings include skimming, scanning, study-type and difficult material reading for main ideas and author's point of view, using reference materials, and reading in content areas, such as sciences, psychology and humanities. The students also learn about previewing, overviewing, and reviewing book-length materials.

What I hope to convey, as a teacher of this course, is that speed reading can be "taught" only to a limited degree, and that real progress, after basic knowledge is gained, is a matter of personal motivation and practice. Speed reading is essentially a self-taught skill.

What I admire most in the six students taking this course in speed reading is that they chose to give themselves a difficult challenge for personal improvement, and that they are meeting this challenge with energy. This course in Speed Reading is the first of its kind in Inverness County, and hopefully, the precursor of other similar academic courses. Possibilities are endless if the demand is expressed, such as vocabulary development, Business English, reading fiction, poetry appreciation, short story writing, and more.

Arts Calendar

May 9- The Lampoon Puppettheatre of Toronto, will be presenting THE LITTLE BLUE HEDGEHOG as part of the University College of Cape Breton's Performing Arts Series in the UCCB Playhouse on Monday, 7:30 pm. Suitable for children grades Primary to four.
Because of his prickly coat of fur, the Little Blue Hedgehog is having a hard time finding a friend. Eventually, the warmth and good heart of the little hedgehog is recognized and he wins many friends.

May 16-18- BLOOLIPS. An English comdic burlesque show at the Cohen Auditorium. "A tongue-in-cheek extravaganza of singing and tap dancing. "Buckets of fun." *Tickets: $17.00 and $15.00 students and* senior citizens. Info/reservations: 424-2646.

May 31, June 1-3- NEED TO KNOW. At the Cohen. A gripping story of sexual politics and political kidnapping in Central America as seen through the eyes of Anthony and Cleopatra." . . ."An advant-garde dramatic theatre producion in which text is secondary to movement" . . . and there is no "message or morals."
Tickets: $12,50 regular and $10.50 students and seniors.

June 8-11- The Gilbert and Sullivan Society presents IONANTHE at Neptune Theatre. Opening night benefit for the Canadian Cancer Society. Info: 429-1287.

Who am I?

I get up every morning between 6:30 and 7:00,
but I'm not a farmer, pulpcutter or fisherman.

I make breakfast, dinner and supper, and I bake,
but I'm not a cook, waitress or a baker.

I houseclean and wash clothes,
but I'm not a maid or laundermat attendant.

I bathe children, wash and brush their hair,
and wipe their noses,
but I'm not a hairdresser or a nanny.

I teach children to tie their shoes, use their
manners and safety rules,
but I'm not a teacher or a policewoman.

I drive kids to their friend's home and take care
of them when they're sick,
but I'm not a taxi or bus driver, or doctor.

I stress the importance of brushing teeth
and cleanliness,
but I'm not a dentist or a health nurse.

I listen to prayers and confessions, try
to settle arguments, and sometimes give advice,
but I'm not a priest, judge or Ann Landers.

I do a lot of other things too.

I don't get a weekly salary, vacation or UI stamps,
but I am tired at the end of the day,

Who am I?

by Glenna Wier

Partici-Paper

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