

Local program makes difference

Schreiber and Terrace Bay are no different than any other Canadian town or city in some respects. One similarity is that they share a certain percentage of population which cannot read a bank deposit slip, nor can they add or subtract numbers on that slip.

Some concerned people in Schreiber and Terrace Bay are doing something to change that.

In a survey published by Southam News Service a few years back, it was estimated that upwards of 4.5 million Canadians cannot read, write or use math to a degree necessary to function in our society.

Those people are termed "functionally illiterate" or "undereducated adults," but the very term "illiteracy" is not well defined.

The official definition of illiteracy is "less than eight completed years of schooling."

However, the survey has found that many high school graduates — and a surprising number of college and university graduates — cannot perform basic reading and writing tasks.

Pam McKeever, co-ordinator of the area's literacy program Reading and Rising, estimates that the area's literacy rate is anywhere between the Stats Can figure of 15 per cent and a more realistic estimate of 18

per cent.

The program is originally based in Schreiber, but McKeever said it's just a matter of formalizing an agreement to have Terrace Bay officially involved in the program.

Currently, the students and tutors are from both communities.

The 14 active volunteers are specially trained to provide personalized instruction to the 12 students on an individual level.

The program's \$26,000 budget is funded by the Ministry of Skills Development and is overseen by Mrs. McKeever. She acts as a link between the tutors and students, and she administers the program.

She also visits different functions to explain the program and take any help she can get.

She said she has spent up to 10 hours a week speaking to community groups and visiting places like the Rosspoint Fish Derby trying to gear up interest.

The program starts in October and runs until May. Mrs. McKeever says she has noticed an improvement in the reading skills of the students taking the course.

"I can say I've seen amazing progress," she said, adding that some didn't start the program until the beginning of October.

"I've noticed amazing change. Although it's difficult to measure, this progress is noticeable," she

said.

She told the *News* that another tutor training program is expected to begin in May. All that is asked is a commitment of three hours per

week minimum for seven months.

Mrs. McKeever recognizes that some people may be concerned with the length of time, but the program begins in the Fall when

everyone has returned from camp and has had their fill of summer activities.

The students enrolled in the program come from varied backgrounds. Among the students taking the literacy program is an immigrant of Finland.

She graduated as a nurse in her homeland and is considered to have a high degree of education. She would like to continue her profession in Canada, but must pass an English test before she is eligible for employment here.

This is an interesting case because she and her tutor have made an informal agreement. Her tutor teaches her English, and she will teach her tutor Finnish.

Mrs. McKeever told the *News* that teaching adults is a unique experience.

"Adult students bring a lot of experience to the program," and McKeever said that it becomes a relationship in which both tutor and student learn.

Liz Currie, a volunteer tutor who joined the program last Fall agrees. "A lot of tutors learn from students," she said.

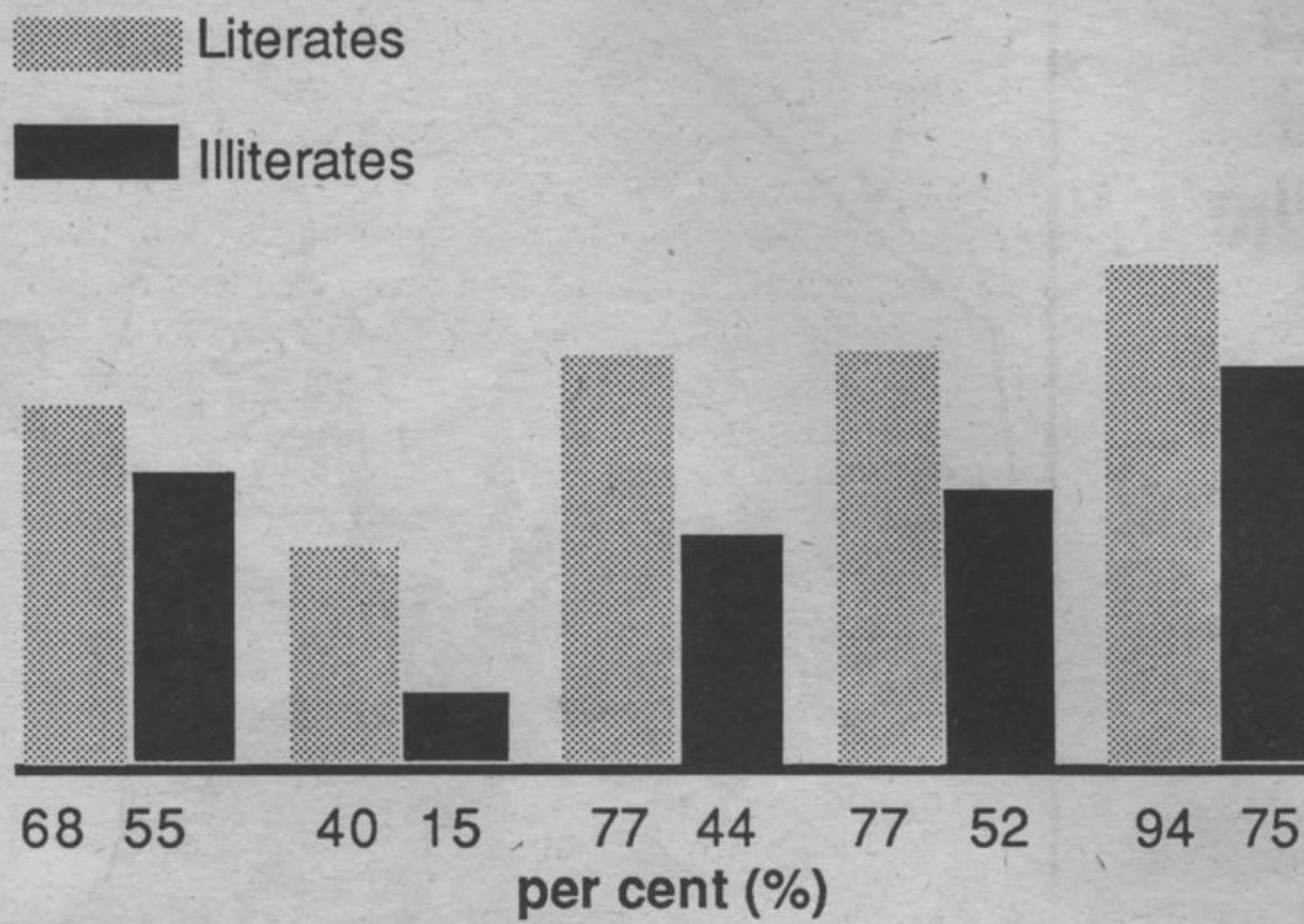
Dorothy Ginn, a tutor from Schreiber, said she became involved in the program last year because she can't "imagine living without being able to read."

"If I want to find something out, I go look it up in a book," she noted.

Those involved in the literacy program would like to give everyone that opportunity.

If you would like more information, contact Pam McKeever in Schreiber, or call the Schreiber library.

What makes a home more literate?



- A: Remember being read to as a child
- B: Typewriter in home
- C: 25 books or more
- D: Daily newspaper
- E: Dictionary

Among other findings in the Southam survey:

- 10 % of Canadians can't understand dosage directions on a medicine bottle
- 20 % can't correctly select a fact from a simple newspaper article
- 40 % can't figure out the tip on a lunch bill
- more than 50 % have serious trouble using a bus schedule

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ANNUAL MEETING
THE McCAUSLAND HOSPITAL

The Board of Governors wishes to remind the public of the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Corporation on Tuesday, June 21st, 1988. To become a voting member of the Corporation, persons must purchase an annual membership (\$ 5.00) or a life membership (\$100.00 in any given year) 30 days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting.

Memberships may be purchased at the Administration Office at The McCausland Hospital. Nominations for election as Governor at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation may be made only by:

- (a) the Nominating Committee of the Board, or Members of the corporation
- (b) provided that each nomination by Members
 - (i) is in writing and signed by at least two Members in good standing;
 - (ii) is accompanied by a written declaration signed by the nominee that he/she will serve as a Governor in accordance with these by-laws if elected; and
 - (iii) is submitted to and received by the Secretary at least thirty days before the date of the annual meeting.

If any member of the Corporation, subject to Hospital By-Laws, wishes to stand as a Governor, please notify the Administration Office at 825-3273 and leave his/her name for the Nominating Committee.


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