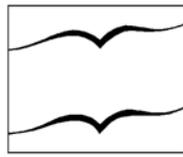
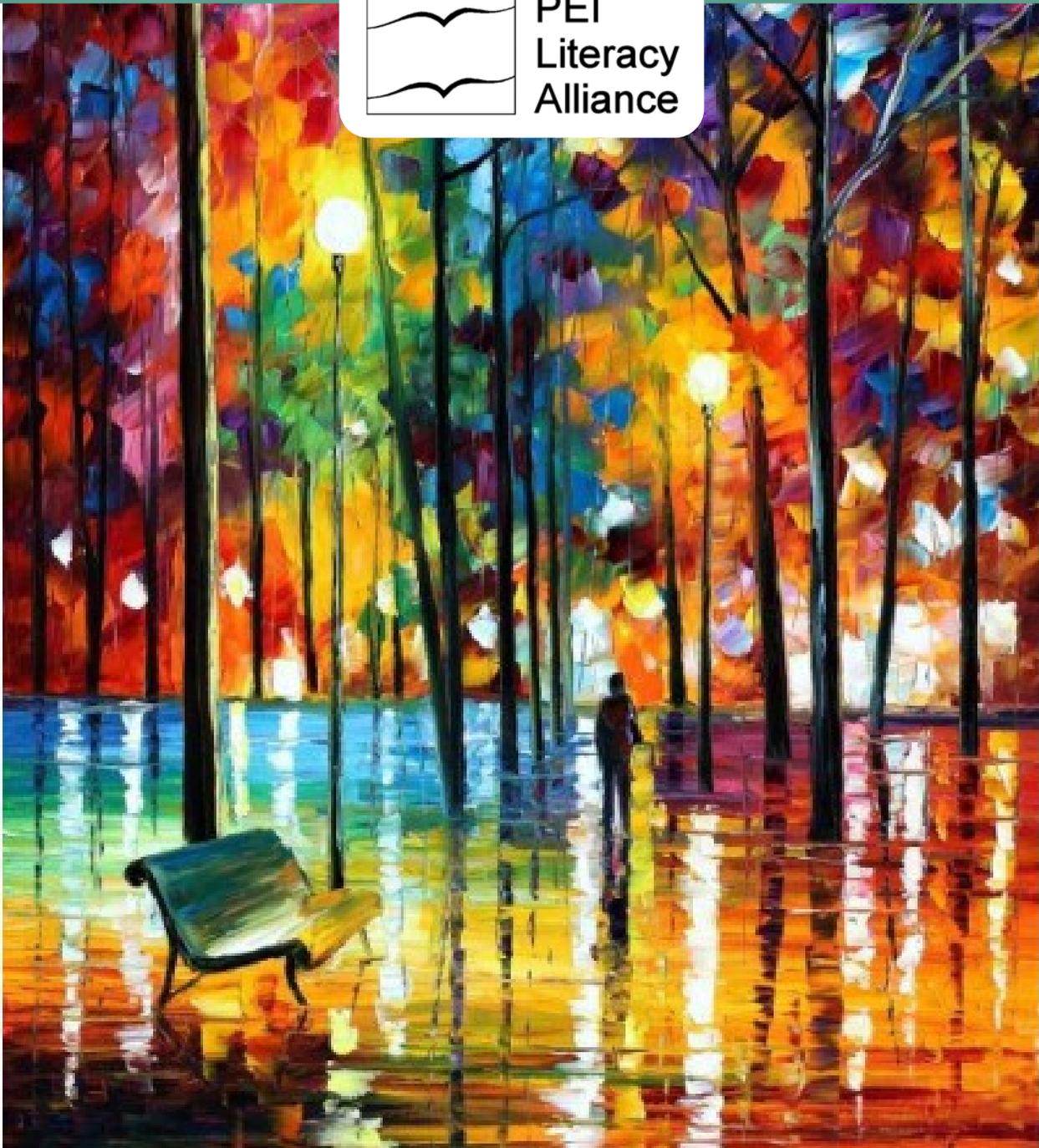


# *Live and Learn*



PEI  
Literacy  
Alliance



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## *Live and Learn*

The newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance

**Created by:**

Jinny Greaves and Amanda Beazley

**Cover art by:** Leonid Afremov

Painting title: Blue Reflections

[www.afremov.com](http://www.afremov.com)

**Submissions:**

Please send to [info@peiliteracy.ca](mailto:info@peiliteracy.ca)

**Contact us:**



**PEI  
Literacy  
Alliance**

PO Box 20107  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 9E3

[www.peiliteracy.ca](http://www.peiliteracy.ca)  
(902) 368-3620

*Literacy and Essential Skills are  
fundamental skills.*

*Almost half of working age Islanders lack  
the reading and writing skills needed to  
participate fully in our knowledge  
economy.*

*We must work together to create a  
culture of literacy and learning for our  
Island to prosper.*

**To find out how you can get involved and  
support literacy in PEI, contact us.**



*Happy Christmas  
Everyone!*

*We hope you all have a  
wonderful holiday season with  
your friends and family.*

*We hope Santa brings you all  
something good to read.*

*Wishing you all the best in the  
New Year.*

*Cheers,*

*Jinny and Amanda*



## THE PEI YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM

By Cindy Lapeña

In support of the need to improve literacy island-wide, the PEI Writers Guild has adopted the PEI Young Writers Program, designed and coordinated by member writer-teacher-artist Cindy Lapeña.

The Program aims to provide more opportunities for PEI's youth to learn how to write well in different creative writing genres with the goal of publication in an annual PEI Young Writers Anthology.

For this program to be truly successful, collaboration and support is being sought from different sectors and organizations, including the English Language School Board and municipal governments. Already on board are Culture PEI, PEI Literacy Alliance, and PEI Home School Federation, to name a few. The PEIWG hopes to see the establishment of a PEIWG Junior Chapter in every public school in PEI within 5 years. Through these Chapters, students will have access to literary workshops, training in creative writing, help and inspiration from professional writers, and the chance to see themselves as published writers.

In the long run, the PEI Young Writers Program will contribute to improving literacy among the youth so that they can excel not only in academics while they are in school, but in the workplace when they become active participants in creating a stronger PEI.

To be part of the program, Sponsor a School, Sponsor a Young Writer, share your expertise, or share your support in any other way, contact:

### Cindy Lapeña

Program Coordinator

[cindylapena@icloud.com](mailto:cindylapena@icloud.com)

(902) 367-2160

Ms. Lapeña, has been an active member of the PEIWG since 2008, and is an award-winning author and long-time teacher who chose PEI as her new home in 2007.





Hello Reader,

The Alliance works to increase the literacy and essential skills of Islanders.

Almost half of all working aged Islanders struggle with reading, writing and math.

The Alliance believes in a culture of literacy and learning where all Islanders can reach their potential and the Island as a whole can prosper.

Research shows if we increase literacy skills by 1% workers will be 2.5% more productive. That return is 3 times higher than investing in equipment.

Not to mention all the other benefits such as improved quality of life, increased community involvement and the positive impact literacy has on the home.

Literacy and Essentials Skills are fundamental skills. They are the Velcro that all other learning sticks to. For example, we all first learned to read and now we read to learn.

Without these necessary skills life becomes challenging. Daily tasks that we take for granted are big obstacles for those who struggle with literacy and essential skills.

Tom Hilton,  
Chair of the Alliance

## The PEI Literacy Alliance Board of Directors



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Human Rights Commission



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Curriculum  
PEI Department of  
Education and Early  
Childhood Development



## The birth of a book about the birth of a country

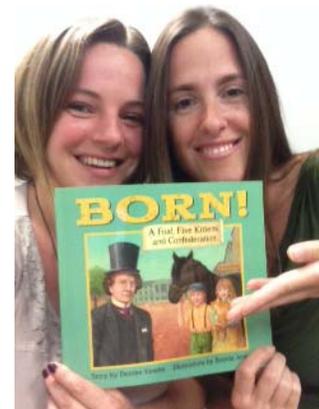
Deirdre Kessler

When the P.E.I. Literacy Alliance asked me if I would work with them to submit a children's book project to the 2014 Committee, I said yes immediately. It was a joy to work with Catherine O'Bryan, Norman Finlayson, Jinny Greaves, and Amanda Beazley.

Immediately I had two ideas that excited me for a children's book set in 1864 and having something to do with Confederation; in the end I combined the ideas to create *Born: a foal, five kittens, and Confederation*. The Alliance asked for suggestions for an illustrator, and I thought of Brenda Jones, with whom I'd worked on *Lobster in My Pocket*, years ago.

We had a grand launch of the book at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery, where several Robert Harris sketches and paintings were hung. I'd incorporated the real person of Robert Harris into my story. Robert Harris, Canada's most famous portrait painter, was fourteen in 1864 when the Charlottetown Conference was held, and he had played in the band that performed at the grand ball and banquet for the politicians who gathered in Charlottetown in the late summer of 1864.

Brenda Jones and I also launched the book in schools across Prince Edward Island: in St. Jean Elementary in Charlottetown, in Alberton Elementary, in Souris Elementary, and we launched the French edition of the book, *Comment Naquirent: un poulain, cinq chatons, et la Confédération* at École Évangéline in Abram-Village.



Amanda and Jinny of the Alliance



École Évangéline book launch

What fun it has been to meet with grade three students across the Island to talk about the creation of a book, about the importance of literacy, and about the role of Prince Edward Island in the discussions 150 years ago that led towards Confederation. And how surprised and delighted the children in grade three have been each to receive a copy of the book to keep.

At St. Jean Elementary I asked the students to imagine life 150 years ago. What was it like then? The answers had Amanda Beazley and me bursting with suppressed laughter. One grade three student said, “A hundred and fifty years ago was the dark time when there were dinosaurs.” “No,” said another, “It was the medieval when there were dragons.” Another student asked, “Was Mr. Hyde alive then?” Was he was referring to Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde? Yes, he was.

It’s clear to me that my story and Brenda’s illustrations will help the children imagine themselves living on the Island 150 years ago, observing the events of September 1864.

This book project with the P.E.I. Literacy Alliance has been a delightful experience for me. I know from having published over two dozen books how important it is to work with kindred spirits toward a common goal. Hooray for the P.E.I. Literacy Alliance and the committed, dedicated people at the Alliance who do such necessary and good work every day, year after year.



Brenda Jones, Jinny Greaves, Deirdre Kessler and Minister Robert Henderson pose with Sir John A. MacDonalD to promote *Born: a foal, five kittens, and Confederation*.

## The Back Page



Our Books for Treats program provided over 100 kids with new books instead of candy this Halloween.

Our Board members Tom Hilton and Linda Fraser hawked newspapers for Post Media's **Raise a Reader Day**. Thanks to The Guardian and the Journal Pioneer for fundraising over \$15,000 for our family literacy programs.



### Family Literacy Day 2015

January 24  
12 to 3 pm  
Confederation Centre  
Art Gallery  
Digital Literacy Theme

