

# New beginnings start with returning to school

by Patricia Roy

After losing his job of 35 years, **Leonard (Lenny) Walsh** of Summerside was faced with some tough choices. "I could have gone back to school to finish my education, or I could have tried to find work that paid less," says Lenny. He chose to return to school.

"It's a decision I've never regretted," he says. "The positive attitude and respect in the **Adult Education** program in Summerside is just awesome. At this time of my life, it's exactly where I want to be."

## Adjusting to life without work can be difficult

Lenny says the time between losing his job and returning to school was very difficult. "Leaving a lifetime of friends and co-workers is similar to losing a loved one. There is mourning for a loss that society in general may not always understand or recognize.

"I was devastated when I lost my job and did not know where to turn. Finally, after a year of feeling depressed and not wanting to leave the house, I got the courage to go to **Career Development Services (CDS)** in Summerside."

## Career Counsellors helped with making a plan

Lenny says the Career Counsellor advised him to speak to someone at mental health. "It took me three days to build up enough courage to drive to the hospital. Once there, I sat in my car in the parking lot for an hour because I did not want anyone to see me go into that section of the hospital. The staff immediately understood what I was dealing with. After a few sessions with a mental health counsellor, I went back to CDS and we worked on a plan for me to begin school."

## The classroom

"Once inside the doors of the classroom, the fear of starting over was quickly forgotten in this positive environment. I earned my GED last year. Because I could not find work this past summer, I decided to return. I've learned that I can learn. This year I have a 93 percent average. I never had marks like that when I was in school 40 years ago," he says with a chuckle.

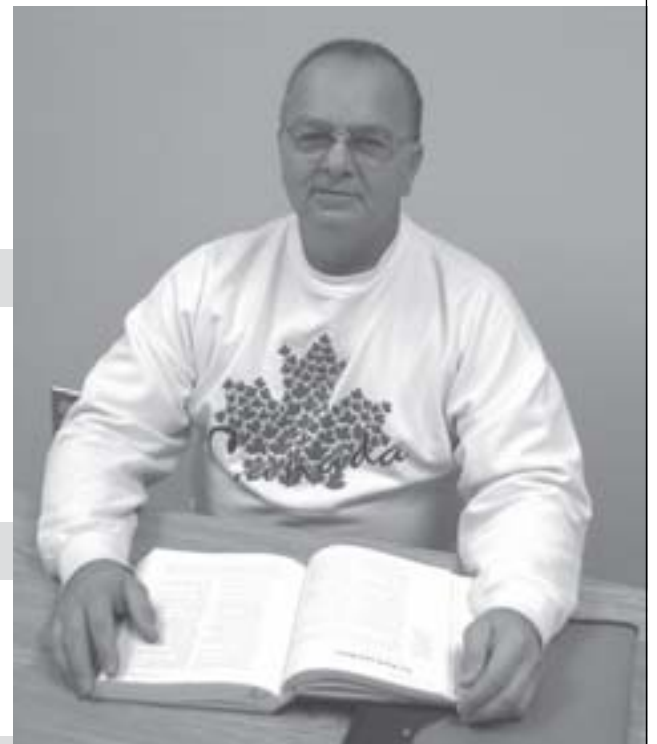
Lenny admits that he did very little reading during his working life. "There seemed to be no need for it because it was much easier to turn on the TV. But last year for the very first time in my life I read a book from cover to cover. I had never understood what people meant when they said they got 'into' a book, but now I do and I just love it."

## Finding work and making future plans

Finding a workplace that will hire people over 50 has not been easy. "I applied several times at one company and could not get hired even though the job was still listed on their website," he says. "I have also looked into taking biology courses next year for possible future work in river enhancement. I would love to work outside. I could also take carpentry courses because I know there is a demand for people to do small jobs."

## Advice for anyone thinking of returning to school

"Once you get past the doors, you will not regret it," he says. "Everyone can learn and the instructors will work with you. Just go for it."



Leonard (Lenny) Walsh of Summerside returned to school after the window manufacturing plant where he had worked for 35 years closed. Now in his second year at Adult Education in Summerside, Lenny is making plans for a career change.

For more information about **Adult & Community Education**, contact the central office at **566-9628** or call toll-free **1-800-446-5265** (press 3)

# Summer School Classes 2009

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✓ **Chemistry 521, 621**

✓ **Physics 621**

✓ **Biology 621**



Please note that Math and Chemistry 621 level courses require the corresponding 521 level course as a prerequisite.

**Start Date:** Monday, June 1, 2009

**End Date:** Saturday, August 22, 2009

**Schedule:** Monday & Wednesday, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm  
Saturday, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

**Cost:** \$350

**Locations:**

**Charlottetown** Montgomery Hall,  
305 Kent Street,  
East Wing

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To register, contact Admissions Office,  
Montgomery Hall, **629-4214** or **1-800-446-5265**