

Have the read of your life

The Take A Joy Read, Canada campaign, an experiment in mass marketing, hopes to become the loudspeaker for the voices of hundreds of Canadian authors and independent publishing houses.

by Alex Pope

Getting published with an independent press used to be the literary equivalent of selling tapes and CDs out of the trunk of your car: quaint, sincere, and an appreciable sales challenge. Now, though, a new nationwide campaign is attempting to put independent publishing houses and the fresh and talented but frequently underappreciated voices they represent on a par with the major commercial publishers by getting their books noticed, praised, and yes, even sold.

Take A Joy Read, Canada is a yearlong marketing campaign that hopes to eke out a more prominent position for small, independent publishing houses in the commercial culture market and the consciousness of the vast Canadian readership. An initiative of the Literary Press Group - a non-profit association of Canadian publishers - and funded in part by the Department of Canadian Heritage, it encourages Canadians of all ages and reading levels to take "the road less traveled" when it comes to their choices for reading material.

According to campaign coordinator Evan Munday, "The main goal is to give these great books from independent literary presses a real marketing push."

Says Munday, "The presses often can't afford the marketing campaigns that multinational publishing houses can, and this campaign is an effort to get these books into more stores, on more display tables, and ultimately, in the hands of more readers, who will (we hope) recognize the quality of literature being produced by Canada's small- and medium-sized presses."

Every two months, titles from participating independent publishing houses across the country are chosen and showcased on special Joy Read display tables in in-

dependent book stores, large commercial retailers like Chapters, and promoted on amazon.ca. The titles of the month are also advertised in The Globe and Mail and in prominent urban weeklies.

Amber Rider, General Manager of Edmonton-based publishing house NeWest Press, describes Joy Read as "an opportunity for publishers to make a new kind of connection with a broad cross-section of Canadian booksellers and readers." The publishers and their authors benefit from the increased exposure, and the Canadian readership benefits from a broader selection of reading material to choose from.

According to Joe Blades of local independent Broken Jaw Press, it is "a challenge to get the stores to order the books" published by independents, "and if they're not ordered, the books don't get read. The first step is to get the books out there."

Although he calls Joy Read "a test of different ways of marketing," he notes that Broken Jaw Press has enjoyed an increase in public attention since submitting several titles to the campaign. "There certainly has been initial stocking orders to get the books out to places that wouldn't ordinarily carry them," he admits. "Even the ads give [the authors] more visibility, and a lot of people seeing them in a newspaper don't make the distinction between whether it's an ad or an article, so they are getting more recognition."

Rider agrees. Independent presses "also face the problem of being perceived as regional publishers. This impedes our ability to break into the national market in terms of media attention as well as sales. Joy Read gives us the opportunity to participate in a national campaign that gets our name, our authors, and our titles into the national media."

Fredericton's own Westminster Books is one of the independent booksellers supporting the campaign by sporting a highly visible Joy Read display. Julianne North, head of Special Orders at Westminster, says the store chose to get involved with the campaign because "we like to support Canadian publishers, and we thought it was a really neat initiative on their part."

Although North observes that "it seems to have taken a long while for people to notice [the program]," she believes "a lot of people who have are now looking forward to [the books] each month. I think they like seeing it in the paper and being more aware of Canadian publishers."

The publishers and authors certainly can't complain. As Rider puts it, "The advertising, increased stocking of books and store displays are all the kinds of promotion that literary presses cannot always afford to do independently, but as a group with a program like Joy Read, it becomes possible."

The bookstore on the UNB Fredericton campus is also supporting the program, so be sure to check out the monthly displays, and read *The Brunswickian* for reviews of selected Joy Read titles.



Michele Legendre / The Brunswickian

Take A Joy Read, Canada is a nationwide initiative that aims to bring more titles and authors from Canada's independent publishing houses into the collective consciousness of Canadian bookworms. Pictured above is the Joy Read display at Westminster Books in downtown Fredericton.

Some of this month's Joy Read titles:

- *Touch* - Gayleen Froese (NeWest Press)
- *The Burning Alphabet* - Barry Dempster (Brick Books)
- *Running* - Keith Maillard (Brindle & Glass)
- *A Girl Like Sugar* - Emily Pohl-Weary (McGilligan Books)
- *The Canadian Student Financial Survival Guide* - Graham McWaters and Winthrop Sheldon (Insomniac Press)

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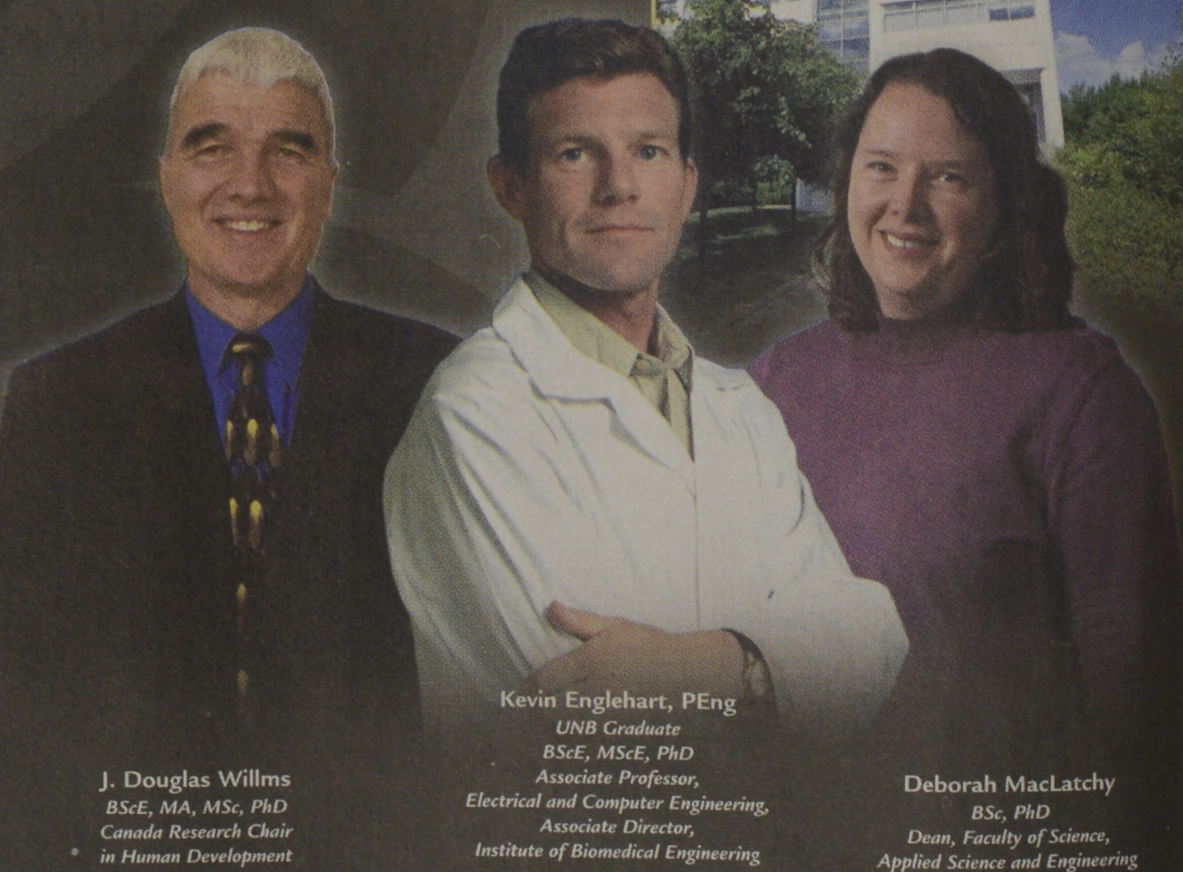
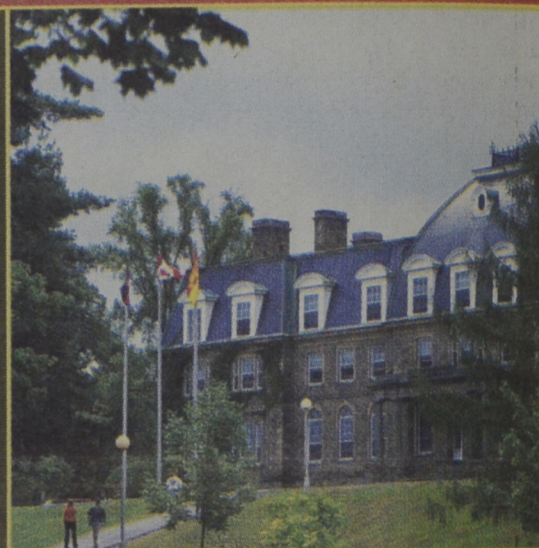
How does an idea improve the lives of many? It starts with a vision. Researchers at UNB have that vision and are playing a direct role in bettering our way of life.

Take Kevin Englehart. The associate director of UNB's Institute of Biomedical Engineering, he designs state-of-the-art control systems for artificial limbs, which have improved the lives of children and adults.

Doug Willms is concerned with tackling problems before they begin. He knows that when it comes to children, identifying and dealing with challenges in early learning development will ensure that our children all have an equal opportunity to learn.

The environment is everyone's concern. Deborah MacLatchy has made it her top priority. She is working with private industry to ensure that our rivers are kept clean for generations to come.

From improving lives through medical innovation to protecting our human and environmental resources, researchers at UNB are making a difference. They're not alone. Our many partners stand behind our researchers, and together, they are ensuring that visions become real solutions.



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Canada Research Chair
in Human Development

Kevin Englehart, PEng
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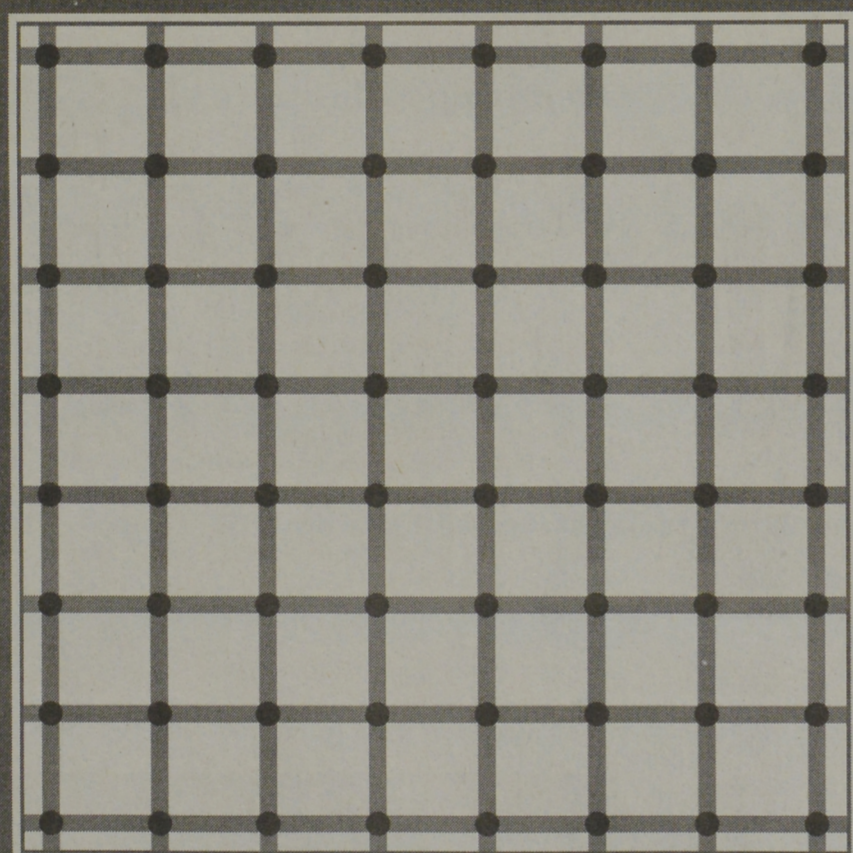
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Things are not always what they seem.

The majority of
UNB students (64%) drink
twice per month
or less often.

Source:
Based on representative survey data collected from fall 2003 and fall 2004 random samples with a total of 748 University of New Brunswick students responding.
www.studentlifeeducation.com

