

Word from the President

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence recently announced the appointment of a new executive director for the organisation following a hiring committee's recommendation of Viveka Melki for the position. She took up her new tasks in August and is busy updating and transforming the organisation.

As president of our organisation since its inception, I am enthusiastic about our new ED and the many opportunities awaiting the organisation. With her talents as a film producer, her success running a small business and her successful integration as an immigrant to Rimouski, Viveka Melki brings a wealth of experience that will be helpful to Heritage. She also knows the community well, having spearheaded the *Visual Voice Film Project* that highlighted the challenges facing youth in our region. Working intensely with the teachers, parents and students of the Metis Beach School brought her into contact with many members of the community and a special insight into its assets and the challenges it is facing.

After more than a decade of offering services to the community, Heritage has many decisions ahead of it. Office space is inadequate. Our links with local and provincial organisations are insufficient. Our budget does not allow for sufficient full-time staff. And our community is changing, with a growing number of young English-speaking residents widely dispersed throughout the community.

The changes to Heritage will be taking place in the weeks and months to come. This newsletter is just one of many communication tools that will be updated and improved. These improvements will be highlighted by Viveka in this and subsequent newsletters. So watch this space and observe the changes and improvements to your organisation.

— *Alexander Reford*



Photo: Claude Morin

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Profile: Viveka Melki

– Susan Woodfine

“We are on the cusp of real change”

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence Executive Director Viveka Melki

By the time this article goes to print, Viveka Melki will have been in the job as executive director of Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence for little more than a month. And already the change is significant. Melki has been busy cleaning house in concrete ways, such as defining job descriptions, revamping the payroll system, and putting Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence back on the map when it comes to attending provincial conferences. Melki has already been to Montreal to shake hands and network with Heritage’s principal funder, *Canadian Heritage*, officials at the *Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)*, and the *Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages*.

Melki is thrilled about the job and feels ready to take on the challenges, “the position, in a way, is very political. The executive director sits on the border between many things, such as the different communities within a region. And from what I can tell, we’re pretty divided as a community so it is not easy to find somebody who is diverse, certainly open, and strangely not attached to anyone in particular yet attached to the group as a whole.” Melki’s background will prove to be an asset. This native of The Gambia, West Africa, is now a Canadian citizen and a fairly new Anglophone in the Lower Saint Lawrence, “I *am* the cultural mo-

saic and yet all of my ‘displaced parts’ allow me to understand the position.”

Viveka Melki wants to reach out to anyone and everyone who will listen, “I arrived as an ‘Anglophone-Newcomer.’ I was a person who wanted an (English) library, I wanted to watch a film in its



Photo: Katherine Levesque

original English version, and I wanted easy access to *The Globe and Mail!*” She is ready to listen, “Each supporter needs to know that this organisation is about them.” Heritage may be ten years old but it is now, says Melki, that the organisation needs to redefine itself. “We are on the cusp of real change and I think it’s timely that I am arriving now. The defining process will begin soon.” Melki is hitting the ground running at the community level. She has organized a series of ‘roving consultations’ this month (in Rimouski and Métis-sur-Mer – see calendar), which is part of a province-wide process by the Anglophone community’s umbrella organisation, the QCGN. The objective is to collect information from different communities. Melki’s goal is to find out what Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence’s five-year goals and objectives should be. For example, she says, “What are the top five issues faced by our diverse community that must be addressed as a matter of priority?” And while Melki doesn’t pretend to know all the answers, she is blunt, “I don’t want to hear that we are just a population of 1,300. Yes, we’re small, but that does not mean that what we have to say is not pertinent. We have a wonderful,

diverse community, rooted in Métis-sur-Mer, one of the oldest Anglophone communities in Quebec as well as newcomers who have chosen this corner of the world as their home.”

This executive director is focused, “I think it is important that our internal structure is solid so one of the main things is getting to know my team, focusing on their needs, listening to ideas, stabilizing... and then the rest of it is being a director: knowing that people have their strengths and weaknesses, that they live the fine balance between family and work, and that you have to dance around that... I get that too, I have a 1 year old daughter.” When asked what people can expect from here on in, Melki smiles, “People can expect my presence - I am listening, organizing events in the community, representing our region outside of the Lower Saint Lawrence.” Melki refuses to say what the priorities should be, “I can’t answer that for everyone, but I know that our youth is a big issue for me, and I see a lot of potential for the organisation as a whole.”

When asked what is her favourite place in the Lower Saint Lawrence she is moved, and replies, “That question touches my heart. It is at the delta of

“People can expect my presence – I am listening”

any river that flows into the Saint Lawrence River, because that is the place of change, the place that feeds the bigger picture, and especially, the place we must nurture and protect.” Melki has a big job on her hands, but if October’s scheduled events and this year’s Remembrance Day activities are any indication, then Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence is definitely on the cusp of changing into something even more special than it already is!

Future field biologists in training at Metis Beach School



- Susan Woodfine

Thirteen students began their school year in the field on a canoe-camping trip and so far, the results are good. Science teacher Terra McMullen says she didn't know what to expect on the trip but says the risk was well worth it, "It has been great team building for the students. It's about trust and building relationships among students and between teachers and students." McMullen's gut feeling was good because she began taking the students outside the classroom last year for cross-country skiing. This year, only two students were left behind for the three-day excursion because of prior commitments. Students showed up at the school with tents, sleeping bags, food, mattresses, and a whole lot of excitement as they paddled 50 kilometres down the majestic Restigouche River with professional guide Roland Foucault.



River guide, Roland Foucault

The students headed to Northern New Brunswick to explore the Restigouche River Watershed. The journey wasn't just about learning how to paddle or set

"Just seeing these kids happy, working together and hearing comments like 'it's so beautiful here' and nobody complaining about not having their iPod, that was worth it!"

up tents; mind you, it was a first for several of the students. English teacher Erin Ross had them keep a journal to record their thoughts and observations, art teacher Lynn Fournier had some sketching on the menu, and Terra McMullen equipped them with the right tools to do some serious water sampling. The results are worth talking about. Some of the students even think the mayor in Restigouche should be informed. Thirteen year olds Karianne Levesque, Nicolas Soucy-Ross, and Michel Castonguay use scientific terms such as 'coliform', 'phosphate', and 'nitrates' in a way that would make any science teacher proud. They all agree on one thing, "There are far too many phosphates in the Restigouche River. We just don't know where they are coming from." Soucy-Ross thinks they are from potato farms.

Castonguay has another theory, "There are too many trees being cut down and when it rains, a lot of bad things (sediments) go into the river and that's not good. My teacher is even wondering why there are so many salmon there, because it is not really a healthy place." This younger crew enjoyed the science but they really loved the canoeing, "I had never really paddled before so that

HLSL Presents



Bandoneonist Denis Plante
with guitarist David Jacques &
cellist James Darling

Sunday October 9th, 2 – 4 p.m.
at Café-sur-Mer
160 rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer

Hot scones and tea available,
30% off everything in the store!

Free Concert

was fun, I didn't like the rain but I saw bald eagles," says Levesque, "I had never seen one before." Castonguay thought the squirrels playing tag in the forest were pretty fast and cool. And while Soucy-Ross says he won't be a biologist, his words are slightly nuanced, "Science is fun, and the trip was fun. It is more the teacher that is fun, not the science. They use bizarre vocabulary sometimes. Ms. McMullen gives us challenging work like testing water – it's just easy with her." Levesque is adamant, almost passionate about her field trip, "I love science and I am going to be a zookeeper ...so this is all good!"

they like it or not. "If we send these results to someone like the mayor, maybe we will help change something for the better," says Soucy-Ross, "But maybe he's not interested," he concludes. Whalley isn't so sure. "Maybe he would listen because the Restigouche River is an important part of the economy. If there are fewer fish, there is less money coming in."

In the meantime, the Metis Beach School students are keeping their fingers crossed for another trip at the end of the school year to collect more data on

the Restigouche River and maybe the nearby Patapedia River. Their science teacher is keen but funds are tight. The school used half of its transportation budget on the trip. The students may be surprised to hear that McMullen's best memory has nothing to do with science, "Just seeing these kids happy, working together and hearing comments like 'it's so beautiful here' and nobody complaining about not having their iPod, that was worth it!"

"It has been great team building for the students. It's about trust and building relationships among students and between teachers and students."

Senior students Dillinger Whalley, Guillaume Soucy-Ross and Bianca Castonguay gave specifics about their water sampling and are convinced that a second trip would be fun but, moreover, useful. "We tested two sites and both were positive with bacteria. This isn't good, I think there is sewer run-off or septic tank stuff happening" says Whalley. "You can get sick from the coliform. I know it is okay to have some coliform in our system but too much can cause disease," says Castonguay. Dillinger won't admit that science is fun but he says it is useful and understands why people like finding this stuff, "If all my other choices didn't work out like law or being a police officer, this could be fun too." Castonguay isn't ruling out anything for now as well, "If I can't be a social worker or psychologist, I could see myself being a wildlife biologist."

In the meantime, these students are definitely thinking like biologists whether



Clockwise from top: Future biologists doing water sampling; Tough teachers Ms. Erin Ross and Ms. Terra McMullen; Ms. Lynn Fournier and her son Simon Lapierre; Dillinger Whalley and Jonas McKindsey moving down the river; Metis Beach School gang enjoying a snack along the river; Big time happy campers and canoers!

Finding religion in modern day Quebec

- Susan Woodfine

Finding religion in modern day Quebec
Thursday, October 27th 7 p.m.
Musée régional de Rimouski

Shaun Turriff is hoping to woo listeners to learn about his PhD thesis later this month at the Musée régional de Rimouski. Turriff will present an English Power Point presentation followed by a bilingual Q & A on his work at the department of Religion at Concordia University in Montreal. His subject matter may appear heavy even for a devout Catholic but Turriff is sure he has interesting subject matter, even for the non believers! In the last few years, Turriff, a native of Métis-sur-Mer has been looking at 'Quebec holy figures in the Roman Catholic Church and how they embody cultural and political tensions that have marked the social landscape of Quebec in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' Turriff has chosen some 'hot-topic Saints' such as the recently canonized Saint André Bessette (better known as Brother André).

This Anglo Quebecer believes all of this is relevant in today's socio-political reality, particularly on issues that came up during the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, the kirpan/hijab debate, and the crucifix in the Quebec National Assembly. Turriff is ready to talk, "This all relates to the Quebec national identity and the cause (and history) of nationalism in general."

Turriff was born and raised on the Gaspé Coast and spent much of his life

in Murdochville and his summers in Metis then eventually made his way to Montreal where he now lives.

So how does one end up in religious studies and did he want to be priest at some stage? "My interest in religion began in CEGEP, where I took a few religion classes as electives. As an undergraduate, I did a minor in religion, as I found it an interesting lens through which to observe human behaviour and history. Religion has often been, and in some ways still is, omnipresent in human affairs. And, contrary to what most people think, I did not ever seriously consider being a priest, no."

Turriff is keen to come back to the region: "I know Metis well, but Rimouski less. It was only this past year that I began to explore the city (Rimouski), and even then, only cursorily. I had no idea, for instance, that there was any appreciable Anglo population at all...so I am thrilled to be giving a lecture there." Turriff will give a 35 minute lecture followed by a bilingual Q & A. Everyone is welcome.

And Turriff will be back in the classroom as well. He will take his stories of research to the Metis Beach School, "I don't have much experience with younger pupils, but I'm ready for the



challenge. I'm not sure exactly what to expect, but with a bit of luck, their questions will guide me in the right direction. Everybody has questions about religion, and I'm sure the students will come up with some really interesting ones."

HLSL Presents

Rimouski Cultural Circle: Shaun Turriff Lecture

**Thursday, October 27th
7 p.m. Musée régional
de Rimouski, 35 rue Saint
Germain O, Rimouski.**

Our Voice Matters ...

"Where do you want to see our community in fifteen years?"

"What are our five-year goals and objectives?"

"What are the top five issues faced by our community that must be addressed as a matter of priority?"

We have reached an important point in the story of **Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence**. It is a time of **vision**, and a time to reset the agenda for the next 5 years for our community. To do so, we need your help.

The **Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)**, our umbrella organisation, is undertaking a priority-setting process for the English-speaking community of Quebec. The Community Development Priorities Conference will be preceded by a '**roving consultation**' that aims to collect information from the community sector, and brings to the community sectors' attention trends and areas of collective interest. The purpose of the consultation is to hear the concerns, plans and aspirations of individual community sector organisations.

Each region of Quebec is participating and it is crucial that our region, the **Lower Saint Lawrence**, **has a voice** that will be heard on the provincial level. This is not the time to hold back, for the decisions we bring forth in the coming weeks will directly affect our everyday reality - our culture, our health, our children and the place we hold in **Quebec society**.

On Behalf of our Board of Directors and as the new Executive Director, I extend a heartfelt invitation to you all.

-Viveka Melki

We will be holding two community consultation meetings:

Metis Town Hall, October 11, 2011 (4:30 to 7:30 p.m.)*

Aux Bienfaits (1 Rue de l'Évêché O, Rimouski)

October 13, 2011 (5:00 to 7:30 p.m.)*

**Wine and Cheese will be served at both events.*

Fall Calendar of Events

October

Saturday, October 8th

Thanksgiving Supper at Metis Town Hall 2 seatings
6 p.m. & 7:15 p.m.
Adults \$12 Children (under 12) \$6



Sunday October 9th

Tea & Tango

2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Bandoneonist Denis Plante
invites guitarist David Jacques & cellist James Darling
(160 rue Principale, Metis-sur-Mer) **FREE CONCERT!**

Tuesday, October 11th

Wine & Cheese followed by QCGN Roving Consultation
in Métis-sur-Mer 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 13th

Wine & Cheese followed by QCGN Roving Consultation
in Rimouski 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. at Aux Bienfaits
1 rue Évêché Ouest, Rimouski

Thursday, October 27th 7 p.m.

Rimouski Cultural Circle presents a
bilingual lecture with Shaun Turriff at Musée régional de Rimouski

November

At 11 a.m., on the 11th Day, of the 11th month, 2011...

We will Remember

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence will present
a full week of activities this year including:

Remembrance Day Ceremony at Metis Beach School
A Town Hall Museum display of photo and artifacts
(please contact Pam Andersson at our office if you have items to share)
Veterans Lunch on the 11th, at the Metis Town Hall

**We will be sending out a calendar of events for
Remembrance Day activities**



HLSL Presents

in partnership with the
Association socio-
culturelle de Métis

Seniors Hot Lunches

Oct. 25th, 2011

Halloween theme
so come in costume!

Nov. 7th, 2011

Remembrance Day week,
Photo display and
lunch time guitar music
with Philippe Moreau

Dec. 13th, 2011

Christmas Lunch
(Local Arts & Crafts)

The lunches are at the
Metis Town Hall
& start at 12 noon.
Cost: \$5.00

*Thank you to the
Association socio-culturelle de
Métis and volunteers for their
participation in this event.*

Heritage Lower
Saint Lawrence
2012 Calendar
A Place For All Seasons

Photographs
by Gary Diener
\$13 each or 2 for \$25

Please contact
The Heritage office at
418.936.3239

Left to right: Marie-Claude Giroux, Health & NPI Coordinator; Pam Andersson, Office Coordinator; Susan Woodfine, Newsletter & Rimouski Cultural Circle; Viveka Melki, Executive Director



Last word...

*Besides the Autumn poets sing,
A few prosaic days
A little this side of the snow
And that side of the Haze -*

*A few incisive mornings -
A few Ascetic eves -
Gone - Mr Bryant's "Golden Rod" -
And Mr Thomson's "sheaves."*

*Still, is the bustle in the brook -
Sealed are the spicy valves -
Mesmeric fingers softly touch
The eyes of many Elves -*

*Perhaps a squirrel may remain -
My sentiments to share -
Grant me, Oh Lord, a sunny mind -
Thy windy will to bear!*

~Emily Dickinson~

Your Organisation

Alexander Reford President

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