



# HERITAGE

Lower Saint Lawrence  
Bas-Saint-Laurent

The English-Speaking Community of the Lower Saint Lawrence

Fall 2012

## The life of our community

Word from the President

Now that the afterglow of a beautiful summer and a series of successful events has passed, Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence (HLSL) has a full agenda.

The political winds are shifting and, like other English-language community groups in Québec, we are wondering how the recent election of a new PQ government will affect our community. The public messages from Quebec City are encouraging, but we can expect there to be a shift in the nature and level of support of services to anglophones in many areas of provincial jurisdiction. At the same time, the federal government is going through a significant re-engineering process, affecting all levels of the public service and many programs. As the federal government has been our partner in bringing services to the English-speaking community over the past decade, we are hopeful that the exercise will solidify this partnership – but we are preparing for change as best we can.

Our new Executive Director, Lisan Chng, and our new board of directors have met many times in the past weeks. We are wrestling with the challenges of managing the resource centre and library, delivering on the long list of projects and initiatives undertaken at the start of the year, and the cost of the successful events that are behind us.

This summer HLSL presented a number of memorable moments: the opening of a bilingual public library and cultural resource centre in June, the launch of Alice Sharples Baldwin's book in both English, *Metis, Wee Scotland of the Gaspé*, and French, *Métis, un brin d'écosse en Gaspésie*, at the historic Killiecrankie Inn in August, the unforgettable open-air performances of *Qualia*, and an evening with the internationally renowned Irish storyteller Mike Burns to close the season in October. Together, these events attracted more than 4,000 people and introduced the organization to new communities throughout the region.

Our next task is to reach out to these same communities, asking them to support the organization in our mission and programs. HLSL remains the only group that organizes activities and offers services for the English-speaking community in the region. It does so with a vision that is open and non-exclusionary: welcoming and accommodating people of all ages, languages and origins.

Be prepared for part of our future newsletters to include a regular appeal for support: for support of our organization, for an event, to take an advertisement in our newsletter, to volunteer in our resource centre or to help with one of the many events proposed over the coming months. Your support is vital – not simply to our capacity to deliver services but also to demonstrate to our partners the lasting importance of HLSL to the life of our community.

*Alexander Reford*

President, Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence

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Photo: Claude Morin

# Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence needs YOU!

The bilingual reality of Canada is lived every day by many of its citizens and this dualism is celebrated and preserved at a federal level through the support of community organizations working for linguistic minority communities.

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence (HLSL) is one such organization, working to serve the English-speaking community in the Lower Saint Lawrence, ensuring that the needs of our bilingual community are met.

We are working to keep the community connected, to break the linguistic and cultural isolation, to promote bilingualism, to preserve the history and traditions unique to the community, to promote arts and culture that may be available in the big cities but that are so often missed in the regions, and to promote

access to health care and health information in English as well as in French.

In order to do this, we organize events and activities, both health-related and cultural; we opened a bilingual library and cultural resource centre; and we create bilingual publications.

However, the best way for us to help you, is to know who you are. We want to reach out to the English-speaking communities and individuals across the region, to get to know the people we are here to support.

The Bas-Saint-Laurent region covers 22,185 km<sup>2</sup> and the 2011 census showed that there are at least 1560 people in the region who speak English as their mother tongue, 1065 of whom English is their single first language.

HLSL is a small organization and does not have the resources to cover such an area, or meet so many people, alone; this is why we need you, your friends, your family, even your acquaintances. We need your help and support if we are really going to make a difference.

We welcome your support in whichever form you can and choose to provide it. Whether volunteering to help serve food for a seniors' hot lunch or sending a monetary donation, attending an event organized by HLSL or telling someone about our organization, your support will make a real difference to your community organization and for this we thank you.

## Swing-sur-Mer

- Jennie Hurwood

For four afternoons between the start of June and the end of September, *café sur mer* stepped back in time to the era of the Savoy Ballroom and Duke Ellington as the café and gallery in the heart of Métis-sur-Mer was overrun with people dancing to the sounds of big band swing and hot jazz.

Not only did people from the local municipality turn out, the afternoons also attracted dancers from Rimouski and Matane, some of whom had never been to Métis-sur-Mer before, but soon fell under its charm.

These afternoon tea dances brought together people of all ages and from different linguistic backgrounds to learn a new (if old-fashioned) dance in a friendly and relaxed environment – just don't dance too close to the glassware!

Not everyone fancied strutting their stuff on the temporary dance floor, but all were able to enjoy the music, ambience and a great cup of tea.

The afternoon tea dances were organized by Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence in partnership with *café sur mer* and a free dance class was offered by teachers from Swing Compagnie (formerly Swing Circle) in Rimouski. The tea dances will be back next summer.



Left: Dancers at the September *café sur mer* Tea Dance

# Riding the Winds of Change

- Lisan Chng

*“Perch where the wind comes at you full force. Let it blow you apart till your feathers fly off and you look like hell. Then abandon yourself. The wind is not your enemy. Nothing in life is. Go where the wind takes you: higher, lower, backwards. The wind to carry you forward will find you when you are ready. When you can bear it.”*

Margaret Wheatley’s words, quoted from her book *Perseverance* resonate with me as I learn to ride the winds of change.

Coming onboard Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence (HLSL) from the corporate world to a non-for-profit community organization, I am embracing change on a personal and professional level. It requires me to abandon old ways of thinking, expand, develop and be at the heart of community building. Change, however, is a constant theme in my life, considering I left my home country and have been living in foreign lands since I was 18 years old.

Coming from Singapore, where it’s 30°C all year round and where there are more than six million inhabitants on a tiny island of just 23km by 42km, I was greeted, not only with the thermal shock of the cold Canadian winters, but also the humbling effect of this immense space surrounding me. Yet, a year after I arrived, I decided to stay, to root myself and to make the Lower Saint Lawrence my home. The beauty of the region is powerful, almost spiritual. It is here that I find myself connecting with people and with life deeply and that makes all the difference for me. The land is cold but the hearts are warm. I have been particularly blessed to have a smooth integration process, given that I came with some knowledge of French and a partner who prepared me well for the snowstorm of Quebecois expressions.

Despite my comparatively easy integration, I constantly craved to express myself in English and connect with English-speakers and newcomers, like myself, without having to reach across oceans. Nothing bonds as quickly

as connecting in one’s own language. It is an antidote to isolation. I believe that Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence has an important role to play in connecting dispersed English-speaking individuals across the region.

Fortunately, I am not alone in believing in the importance of the work HLSL has to do. There is a great team of dedicated staff working alongside with me: Jennie Hurwood from Cambridge, England, who is now our Director of Communications; Anja Kreysch from Germany whom I consider to be our Chief Financial Officer; Marie-Claude Giroux from Quebec City whose heart is always in Métis and who is the driving force behind our health and social services, and network partnerships; and Pamela Andersson from Métis-sur-Mer who is the faithful keeper of our region’s history. On a part-time basis, we also have Ginette Laflamme, a Montréalaise raised in Saguenay who is championing the activities and programs for our new resource centre and library; and Susan Woodfine from Nova Scotia, who writes feature articles and collects amazing local stories for our newsletter. Our culturally diverse team composition is perhaps indicative of a renaissance, of sorts, happening within the English-speaking community in the region.

While this renaissance is happening at a local, regional and even provincial level, every time I drive through Métis-sur-Mer, where the heart of our community and the origins of the organization lie, I am reminded of the importance of preserving the roots of where everything comes from. There is a famous Chinese proverb that says: “When you drink water, remember its source.” The love that the residents demonstrate for the heritage of the land is contagious. An



undeniable part of HLSL is about preserving the stories that made the region what it is today. As the organization looks to reach out and expand, these stories have the power to fire up the imagination of those who have chosen to make the Lower Saint Lawrence their home.

HLSL is going through a transformational phase. Since the launch of the new Heritage Cultural Resource Centre, we have a new community space, a library, a new home for the community you may call it. There is more to be done. HLSL is formulating its strategic direction and objectives in the next few months. But the organization cannot, and must not, do it without you. Your ideas, suggestions and your needs are important.

A great community is one that is engaged. Where its members mutually respect each other, give and take. Where they feel that they belong. Where each person finds a role to play and that it brings out the best in them. Please share with us what you would like to see in your community going forward. The kind of community organization HLSL is going to be lies in your hands. Our team is ready to go where the winds take us. And we hope you will join us for the ride.

To get in touch with your suggestions for how HLSL can meet your needs, please email [info@heritagelsl.ca](mailto:info@heritagelsl.ca) or telephone 418 936 3239.

We look forward to hearing from you.

# Seriously Funny

from Perth to Rimouski

- Susan Woodfine

If the mayor of Rimouski is looking for an ambassador to sell this city, he should call Sean Bresser. This Australian Rimouskois has nothing but good things to say about living on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River.

Mastering the language of Molière, when it is not your mother tongue, can be very frustrating. Bresser, however, finds the experience a sheer delight; it must have something to do with his profession. Now, you may not recognize this displaced Aussie on the street unless he is working. And no, he is not a police officer. Bresser, known to many as Monsieur Nono, is the official sidekick of Clopin Lanouille, Rimouski's beloved clown.

This clown duo and real-life couple first met at a clown festival in China. The two clicked and eventually Clopin, whose real name is Lise-Nathalie Lepage, asked Monsieur Nono to come and clown around in Rimouski, "I'd never heard of the place. Of course I knew about Quebec and was really curious, so I said 'why not?'"

Four years after his arrival, Bresser takes the time to reflect on those early days, "I got settled but then the culture shock set in. I did feel the pressure of not speaking French, but the people are so lovely and so patient, they never make me feel uncomfortable." Bresser is keen to perfect his French but most people here love to practise their English, "As a newcomer you can make your way around easily with limited French and bit by bit I am getting better. I am also amazed at how many people speak English here."

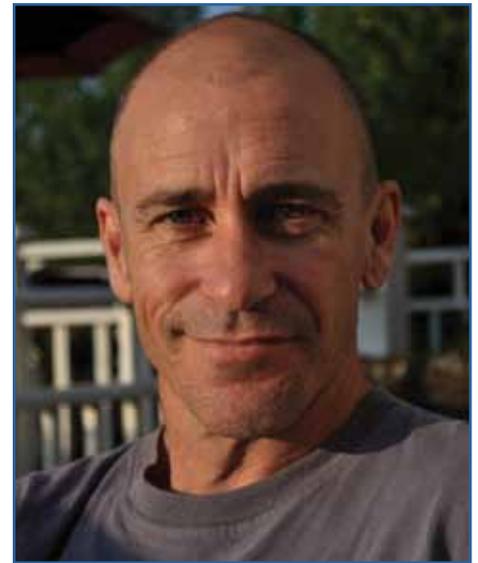
And of course how can one not compare climates? Bresser has the enthusiasm of a child when he talks about his first winter in Rimouski, "I had never experienced winter so that was quite something. Coming from Perth, Australia, we're polar opposites. I was like a kid, playing in the snow, making snowballs and catching snowflakes with my tongue. I still love it today." Bresser has other memories as well, "I will never forget my first skunk. We don't have them in Australia so when I saw the skunk I thought it was a cat. It took me a couple of seconds to realize this could go bad, quickly."

"Australians love to travel, that's what we do," Bresser explains, "I blame that travel bug on my parents. My dad was an engineer with the government and he had to travel a lot. One stint included Darwin and Uluru (Ayers Rock), which is in

the heart of Australia's desert community. That was very different, and I loved it."

This Aussie clown has lived in many countries, including Croatia, Germany, and England. "The difference is that in those other places I would leave after a short visit, so I feel more pressure today, than I first did, about picking up the language." Luckily, his clown job facilitates that malaise. His stage name, Monsieur Nono, is a good fit, "My character is a really silly guy and Clopin plays on that. Quite often I have this really stupid look on my face and sometimes it's for real because I don't understand people when they speak fast and in slang, so the title is good."

You may ask, how does one choose clowning as a career? Well, Bresser is very serious when he talks



about clowning and this professional goof comes with credentials. Bresser is a graduate of the prestigious Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). "Acting is a tough business but clowning isn't bad if you're good at it. I stuck with it, always watching what other clowns were doing



Photos: left and top of page 5, by Sébastien Raboin

and continually improving my act.” The arts program also gave Bresser three solid years of acting that allows him to teach. When Bresser compares himself to the other clown in the house, she wins, hands down, “She has a lot more clowning under her belt, and she’s so good. She is a big clown and as you may have noticed, her shoes are bigger than mine - it will be like that for a while.”

And would Bresser recommend this career to young kids? “Honestly, I wouldn’t recommend it unless you are really going to go for it. You have to put all of your heart and soul into it if you want success. I honestly think someone has to have a degree or some kind of education to back it up, it’s not just about putting on a red nose and doing a dance.”

Readers can catch Clopin Lanouille et Monsieur Nono on the local Cogeco cable station. The two clowns have also created balloon workshops that are going strong, “We are getting so many calls to come to parties, especially for adults, it’s almost like a Tupperware gathering.” And they offer bilingual shows as well.

Bresser is homesick for family in Australia but enjoys life as a newcomer in Rimouski, “The only tough thing right now is seeing my parents grow old over Skype. The distance is tough, but other than that, life is good here.”



Clopin Lanouille and Monsieur Nono performing at Metis Beach School, summer 2012

“Metis Beach School was a really fun gig. It was the first time Nath and I had performed one of our shows in English. It changed the dynamic somewhat as I was the front runner and was able to oil up and wheel out some of my rusty old street performer jokes,” says Bresser. He also noticed how his French is progressing, “[Working in English] was very liberating indeed but oddly enough though, I kept slipping into French! So some of my delivery came with a slight bi-cultural flavour.”

## Stories to Shorten the Road

Mike Burns at Estevan Lodge

- Jennie Hurwood

October 5<sup>th</sup> 2012, the dining hall in Estevan Lodge, at the Reford Gardens, resonated with a rolling brogue, not of these parts. Soon, all those present were transported to the south-west corner of Ireland, into its history and into the mind of Mike Burns.

Originally from Ireland and now a resident of Montreal, Burns has lived in several countries and performed in many, collecting stories along the way; gathering oral history and preserving it in the only way possible: word of mouth.



Irish-Montrealais storyteller, Mike Burns performed his first English-language show in the Bas-Saint-Laurent at the Reford Gardens

For those present, it was not difficult to see why Burns is internationally renowned for his storytelling. As he closed his eyes and gestured, as much to the characters in the story as for the benefit of the people listening to it, he told four tales and took the audience from modern Montreal to Ireland in the 1950s and further, to an Ireland some 800 years before. Burns’ lively narrative and vivid descriptions rendered the tales of kings with horse’s ears and drowning trouts strangely plausible.

Although Burns has visited the Lower Saint Lawrence region on many an occasion, never before had he performed here in English. Nor has he visited the Reford Gardens, but, having arrived a week after they closed for winter, he promised to return to see them, in full bloom, next summer.

*To Shorten the Road, stories with Mike Burns* was organized by Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence in collaboration with *Le Rendez-vous des Grandes Gueules festival de contes et récits de Trois Pistoles* and was made possible thanks to the generous support of the English Language Arts Network, their ACCORD fund and Canadian Heritage. Thanks also go to Pierre Lepage and Yoland Henry for providing toe-tapping traditional Irish music which set the scene and got people jiggling in their seats. This was the first English-language event to take place as part of the *Rendez-vous des Grandes Gueules* festival but it will not be the last.

# On your doorstep and in your language

## The Heritage Cultural Resource Centre and Métis-sur-Mer Public Library

The Heritage Cultural Resource Centre and Métis-sur-Mer Public Library, open since June 2012, are there to meet your community needs. Sure you can borrow books, but do you know what other services are available to you?

### Heritage Cultural Resource Centre

160a rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer  
t: 418.936.3239

Use of the centre is free but please donate anything you can towards the running of the centre so that it can stay open for the whole community. For some services, such as print services, a small fee will be asked.

### Historic documentation and archives

The resource centre houses an extensive collection of historic material and documentation including photographs, articles and books about the Métis area that are freely available for consultation and research whether you're a historian or simply interested in the local history.

### Photocopying/print services

Whether making copies of the reference material in the centre for use at home or printing flyers for your community event, a high-tech Xerox machine is available for your personal use. Please note there is a small fee for printing services.

### Computer and internet access

A laptop with a WIFI connection is provided for your convenience and use.

### Tourist information

Information pamphlets about local attractions and activities are available in English and French at the centre.

### Community notices

Do you have a community event planned? Or perhaps you want to know what is going on in and around Métis-sur-Mer. Two large noticeboards with community news and events are displayed in the centre.

### Job offer information

Hunting or hiring, drop by the centre to see how we can help.

### Information leaflets

A wide variety of pamphlets and information booklets are available in English and French covering topics such as programs for seniors, wills, justice, health and fitness.

### Bookshop

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence is passionate about preserving the history and heritage of the region. We have published two books, with versions in English and French, that are available to buy in the centre: *The Metis Lighthouse* by Alexander Reford and *Metis, Wee Scotland of the Gaspé* by Alice Sharples Baldwin. Other projects including the HLSL annual calendar are also for sale in the centre.

### Métis-sur-Mer Public Library

162 rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer  
t: 418.936.3231

Membership to the library is free and gives you access to many great resources:

### Books

The library offers members choice from more than 2000 books, half of which are in English. Furthermore, as the library is a member of the Réseau Biblio, you can look at the online catalogue of books available to the network of libraries across the region and request any that catch your eye. This also means that if you are not in Métis-sur-Mer, you can request English-language books to be lent to your local library in the Bas-St-Laurent.

### Storytelling

Storytellers are invited to bring children's books to life, in English and French, on the last Saturday of the month, between 1 and 4 p.m.

### Exhibition collections

The library hosts temporary collections on different themes – perfect for people looking to find out more about their favourite topic or to discover something new. At the time of writing, a collection of resources about astronomy is currently available and the founder of the Rimouski Astronomy Club will present a bilingual conference for 9 to 16 year-olds on October 27th.

### Videoconferences

Free health workshops in English are run in conjunction with McGill University in Montreal through the videoconferencing system in the library. Talk to health professionals about issues that concern you without the language barrier.

### Other resources

The library offers a collection of DVDs as well as having subscriptions to magazines, journals and newspapers. Library users also have access to a free WIFI connection and there is even a computer you can use on site.

### The Heritage Cultural Resource Centre is open

Monday to Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Please note that the centre is closed for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. daily.

### The Library is open

Tuesday 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m.

Wednesday 2 to 4 p.m.

Thursday 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. 2 to 4 p.m.  
and 7 to 9 p.m.

Last Saturday of the month 1 to 4 p.m..

# Calendar of Events

## November

**Wednesday, November 7, 1:30 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 8:30 p.m. & Thursday, November 8, 1:30 to 4 p.m.**

**Take Time to Remember Exhibition**

At the Metis Beach Town Hall, 370 Beach  
Free entry. Information: 418 936 3239

**Friday, November 9, from 10:30 a.m.**

**Remembrance Day Ceremony**

at Metis Beach School, 468 Beach  
Followed by a visit to the United Church cemetery  
Information: 418 936 3239

**Tuesday, November 13, noon**

**Seniors' Hot Lunch**

Metis Beach Town Hall, 370 Beach  
A final opportunity to view the Take Time to Remember Exhibition  
\$8 Reservations: 418 936 3239

**Wednesday, November 21, 10 a.m.**

**CHEP Health videoconference: How to Communicate in the Face of a Life-Altering Diagnosis**

Health workshop in English at the Métis-sur-Mer Public Library,  
162 rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer, G0J 1S0  
For information and to sign up: 418 936 3231 or 418 936 3239

**Saturday, November 24, 2 p.m.**

**Christmas is coming to the Métis-sur-Mer Library!**

Christmas exhibition and workshop for children (7+ years)  
Bring your friends! Métis-sur-Mer Public Library  
162 rue Principale Info: 418 936 3231

## December

**Tuesday, December 4, noon**

**Seniors' Hot Lunch – Christmas special**

Metis Beach Town Hall, 370 Beach  
All proceeds go to the food bank Unité Domrémy in Mont-Joli,  
please bring any food you wish to donate.  
\$8 Reservations: 418 936 3239

**Wednesday, December 5, 10 a.m.**

**CHEP Health videoconference: Jog Your Brain (Memory Loss, not Alzheimer's)**

Health workshop in English at the Métis-sur-Mer Public Library,  
162 rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer  
For information and to sign up: 418 936 3231 or 418 936 3239

**Tuesday, December 18, 7:30 p.m.**

**Brazil**

Paraloeil, in collaboration with Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence,  
presents the 1985 classic film by Terry Gilliam.

In English with French subtitles.

At the Coopérative Paradis, 274 rue Michaud, Rimouski  
[www.paraloeil.com](http://www.paraloeil.com)

**Saturday, December 22, 2 p.m.**

**SURPRISE Christmas activity for children**

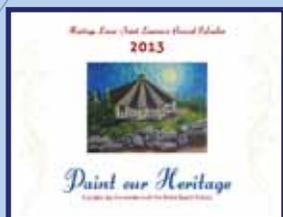
at the Métis-sur-Mer Public Library  
Bring your friends! Info: 418 936 3231

**Every Monday, 5 to 7 p.m.**

**English Conversation "5 à 7"**

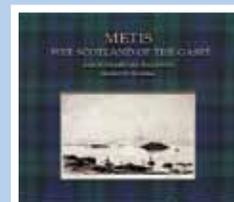
Relaxed and friendly atmosphere, all very welcome.  
Pub St-Barnabé, 50, rue Saint-Germain Est, Rimouski

## Stocking stuffers from HLSL



The 2013 Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence calendar featuring paintings by the students of Metis Beach School  
**Just \$12 for one or \$20 for two**

Alice Sharples Baldwin's classic book on Métis history  
Available in English: *Metis, Wee Scotland of the Gaspé*  
and French: *Métis, un brin d'Écosse en Gaspésie* **Only \$15**



Available at the HLSL office: **160a rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer**. To receive a copy by mail or for more information, please contact Pamela Andersson at [pandersson@heritagelsl.ca](mailto:pandersson@heritagelsl.ca) or on **418 936 3239**

## Last word...

"Monsoor" he hailed the man, a burly, blue-eyed individual driving a flock of sheep across the famous "salt meadows" of the Lower St. Lawrence, "je-je-je Metis?" ... The man stopped with a broad grin – "Well, Sir, that's where ye are or, as you might say, that's where ye'll be if ye keep straight" he answered in the soft burry tones of the Highlands.

"Well for Heaven's sake" exclaimed Mrs. Tourist in astonishment and relief – "you talk like a Scotsman."

"There's naught for to be surprised at in that M'am – we're all mostly Scotch extract down here."

- from *Metis, Wee Scotland of the Gaspé* by Alice Sharples Baldwin

Copies are available for sale from Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence for \$15. Proceeds from the sale of this book will assist Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence in its ongoing program to chronicle the history of the English-speaking communities of the region.



Alice Sharples Baldwin in 1941

## Our Organization

### Board Members

Alexander Reford	President
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Jennie Hurwood	Director of Communications
Anja Kreysch	Accountant
Susan Woodfine	Newsletter Contributor

We are always looking for your ideas in our newsletter.

Please email: [info@heritagelsl.ca](mailto:info@heritagelsl.ca)

### Contact Information

**Telephone: 418.936.3239**

**Office: 160a rue Principale,  
Métis-sur-Mer, G0J 1S0**

**[www.heritagelsl.ca](http://www.heritagelsl.ca)**

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If you would like to help Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence to be more environmentally friendly by receiving your copy of the newsletter electronically, please email [info@heritagelsl.ca](mailto:info@heritagelsl.ca)



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I would like to make a donation of \$25  \$50  \$100  other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive the Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence newsletter by e-mail  mail

I would like to receive all Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence publications and notifications by e-mail

Please return to Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence, 160a, rue Principale, Métis-sur-Mer, G0J 1S0 - Thank you