



Asking for directions... leading the way

Word from the President

If you are like me (and most men) a “road map” is a rather useless device invented to assist the lost, rather than those with some idea of where they are going. In this context, a road map for the English-speaking community of Quebec is probably necessary. We agree on one thing: the Anglophone communities of Quebec need a cohesive sense of purpose. We have lost our way and have been seeking a direction and leadership for a decade, perhaps more.

When I grew up in Aylmer, Quebec in the 1970s, it was fairly clear what the English-speaking community of Quebec was and where it was going. It had strong schools and universities. We got our news from the *Montreal Gazette* and read novels by English Montrealers like Mordecai Richler and Hugh McLennan. We followed the Montreal Canadians, who won the Stanley Cup every year. We had strong political leaders on the local and national level. The Anglophone ministers from Quebec who sat at the cabinet table in Ottawa and Quebec City had important portfolios and wielded their political power to help our community develop. We had access to English culture throughout the province and had no doubt that the federal government would protect us in our hour of need. Forty or more years later, the portrait is very different. Few of Quebec’s mayors are from the English-speaking community, we have no powerful ministers in either Ottawa or Quebec City, the *Montreal Canadians* are unlikely to make the playoffs and most of our culture comes from Toronto or even further afield. Our political influence is slight and waning.

There was no “road map” to guide the community over the past forty years. But this does not mean that we do not need one now. Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence has been taking an

active role in a process set up by the Quebec Community Groups Network to put the community on the road – towards community cohesion, shared objectives, and common models and tools for organizational excellence. Because our region has the smallest Anglophone population in Quebec, our community will probably be one of the greatest beneficiaries of this process. We are defining not only who we are as Anglophones in today’s Quebec, but the relevance of official languages in a climate of change that is affecting all sectors. Despite all this, we hope for continued funding, greater access to arts and culture groups from Montreal and other parts of Quebec, shared resources to keep our school alive, a *Community Learning Centre Network* that is strengthened and programs to educate better the community’s children. The creation of a resource centre, a new grassroots institution, is key and will strengthen our organization and help in the delivery of health and many other services that are essential to our community.

We have heard your needs and it has given us an appreciation of where you would like us to go. We will take your ideas and comments to the meeting of Quebec’s community groups in March and keep you informed as this road map is defined.

Alexander Reford

President, Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence

Table of Contents

Word from the President	1
The Year in Review	2
American Gospel Alive & Well in Bic	4
Executive Director in Action	5
Meeting Mahnaz Fozi	6
Upcoming Events	7
Our Organisation	8



Photo: Claude Morin

A Year in



Counter clockwise from top left: Guitarist David Jacques, cellist James Darling and bandoneonist Denis Plante; Viveka and her team managed to squeeze in 100 people in the wonderful Café-sur-Mer; Kids carving their pumpkins; The HLSL St.Valentine's Day Hot Lunch, Lorne and Winifred Turriff, married 70 years!; Diana Ratté in the clown costume with Françoise Rousseau (president of 50+ Club) handing over a HLSL calendar



Metis Beach School and l'école L'Envol visit the Onondaga Submarine and Empress of Ireland Museum. Above: L'école L'Envol on Rimouski's seaside walkway, Promenade de la mer; Student at the Onondaga Submarine

Photo Credits: Swing Dancing - Louis-Philippe Cusson, All Other Photos - Sébastien Raboin

Review...



Veterans, Roch Lantagne, Raymond Bourget, Ivan Bélanger; Roger Tremblay and Florent Bérubé; Carmen Genest Group Swing event; Pamela Andersson with Lana Turriff; Viveka Melki giving Swing dance tips, Doreen Pearce and Hélène Paradis



Above: On top of Mt.Olivine - Fred, Jean-Pierre, Jonas, Nicolas, Adrien, Terra (teacher), Guillaume;
Right: Mt. Olivine (ascent with snowshoes) - Adrien Annett, Jean-Pierre (our bus driver), Fred (Katimavik student) (front to back)

American Gospel Alive & Well in Bic

- Susan Woodfine



The venue is religious but the mood is definitely not! The location is the magnificent église Sainte-Cécile du Bic, Rimouski, where a handful of folks show up every Wednesday evening to sing English gospel music. Everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary when it comes to music or English says the choirmaster! “There is no attendance and people come because they want to relax and have fun, there’s no pressure here,” says Jovette Taillefer, “I am from the Outaouais and it’s a good way to practice my English and I love to sing... everyone does here... and yet most people have no prior experience.” The crowd varies depending on schedules. The best way to describe the atmosphere would be relaxed. And yet a few admit that there is something spiritual at work.

“The best way to describe the atmosphere would be relaxed. And yet a few admit that there is something spiritual at work.”

The gospel gathering began four years ago and continues to evolve. They began singing in French but realized their passion was to hear and sing English gospel ‘negro spiritual’ music. Although it is an amateur choir, the group got lucky. This choirmaster is a McGill music graduate and currently works as an English teacher in Price, near Mont-Joli. A beautiful energy resonates from the choir as Taillefer puts each and every singer at ease as she finds their voice and calling as to whether they should be a soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, or bass. “I take a one-page song that we can work on and get through by the end of the night. They are all fun pieces,” says Taillefer. I ask the Saint-Valérien native what she gets from it and if there is something religious or spiritual happening here, “Definitely nothing religious for me but maybe for some... people just like the peacefulness of the text.”

The group meets in the decorated vestriary of the church. If you ask why people are here, the answers vary. Some want to practice English, others want to sing English gospel, one woman belongs to another choir and uses this evening to have fun, improve her ‘non-existent’ English, she says, and improve her rhythm. The best way to describe the Wednesday evening session is from the founder of the group and mother of three, Diane Leclerc, “It’s like yoga for the voice.” I tell her that the sound is impressive and that they should give a

concert or two, “I won’t say no to that... but we don’t want any stress. Just relaxation and simple fun lyrics like what we’re doing tonight.”

For more information you can contact Jovette at: 418-736-4946, jovette.taillefer@globetrotter.net or simply show up Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the church, 88 place de l’Église.



From top left: Caroline St-Pierre, Annie Bess, Jovette Taillefer, Pauline Côté and Simone Cimon; Music teacher Jovette Taillefer leads the group in the sacristy of the Ste-Cécile Church in Le Bic; Véronique O’Leary and Carolle Gauthier; Caroline St-Pierre, Francine Gauvin, Véronique O’Leary and Carolle Gauthier

Photos: Joan Sullivan



The Lexicon of being ED

(Executive Director) of
HLSSL (Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence)

My first few months as executive director have been a whirlwind of activity and of new terms: QCGN (Quebec Community Groups Network)... PCH (Patrimoine Canadian Heritage), NPI(Network Partnership Initiative) under Health Canada... amidst the codes, I have dealt with a wide berth of tasks, from transporting 30 pumpkins to the Tea & Tango event in October, booking a trumpet player for Remembrance Day, and shaking hands in Montreal with our provincial partners.

But apart from the VAC***, MBS** and CLC's*, I wanted to share a few moments with you - the faces behind the Lexicon. I have been impressed by John O'Connor's English Happy Hour at St. Barnabé Pub... emboldened by the commitment for the individual community members at the NPI Retreat in Quebec City; touched that some of the youth from l'école l'Envol and Metis Beach School, who went together to the Onondaga submarine for a Remembrance Day activity, told me they had never been. I have been silenced at dusk as the historic lighthouse in Metis

turns your way at last, begging to be saved... do I ever understand the solitude of the newcomer Anglophone guy who just moved from Ottawa, "I moved to Sayabec for love - but boy would I like to have a beer and a laugh in English!"... and I am simply amazed at Rita Turriff's cooking abilities at the Metis Town Hall events and all the helpers who volunteer their time to assist...

**"Behind the Lexicon...
Bis each one of you,
and your right to feel
and create in your own
language."**

Behind the Lexicon, as I create projects and programs, is each one of you, and your right to feel and create in your own language. So simple, yet so essential to one's sense of belonging.

In this, our 10th anniversary, I hope we will see a new phase for the organization. Personally, I hope to see you and your families at our next major event, on **Sunday March 11 at Les Jardins de Métis/Reford Gardens...** there will be dancing, story telling, and each other. Just today, I invited someone, as I was buying the decorations - she is a nun from Rhode Island, USA, living here with her Order...we had a laugh (in English) as she helped me load my car. I thought,

we are everywhere if you bend your ear, if you listen for the slight 'lilt' in the accent, or the elusive understanding of the "passé simple."

Beyond the Lexicon, lies the community... so reach out, join us on Facebook, on our website, pass on this newsletter to someone in the backwoods beyond Amqui... Help us build our own Lexicon one person at a time. RT, JO, VM, SW... so on and so forth.

Viveka Melki(VM)

*CLC: Community Learning Centres

**MBS: Metis Beach School

***VAC: Veterans Affairs Canada

Meeting

Mahnaz Fozi

- Susan Woodfine

From Iran to Rimouski with a few exotic stops along the way, including Paris, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Edmundston, the director of Accueil et Intégration Bas-St-Laurent knows what it is like when immigrants or newcomers arrive in the Lower St. Lawrence. And Mahnaz Fozi has stories to tell about that journey. Fozi and her husband left Iran to seek asylum in Canada on religious grounds. Fozi is part of the Baha'i Faith which is the country's largest minority religion, one that is perceived as a threat by the Muslim clergy in Iran.

Mahnaz Fozi's office is quietly tucked away in the basement of the Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR)'s main campus, www.aibsl.org. But be prepared, you may be interrupted by a phone call or a knock on her door and that conversation may not be in English or French. When I arrive to meet Mahnaz Fozi, she is helping a Columbian mother and daughter sort through some paper work. Only a few minutes go by before we are interrupted by a young woman who starts speaking in a very unfamiliar language, Fozi smiles, "Don't worry it's normal you didn't understand, it's Farsi. I don't get to speak it outside the home, she is from Iran." When you meet Mahnaz Fozi, you have to listen carefully. Her voice is soft; it's as if she is whispering at times. But beware – she is a force to be reckoned with. Many people in Rimouski know 'Madame Fozi' she is undeniably at the heart of making Rimouski and the Lower St. Lawrence a much warmer place for people who arrive from distant places. She has helped organize many activities for locals in the Lower St. Lawrence, including Metis Beach School, to embrace and showcase what cultural diversity is all about.

This Iranian-born Rimouskoise believes the group has made great progress and is well rooted in the community as it happily celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence has been affiliated with the group's activities in the past and continues to strengthen those ties. The latest Heritage initiative is obvious as soon as one walks into the AIBSL office - there are plenty of brochures and a poster hangs on the office wall profiling Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence's work and territory.

The demands are not great but, "We get calls from time to time to assist Anglophones in the region in the way of accessing French classes," says Fozi.

There are about 1,300 immigrants in the Lower St. Lawrence according to Fozi's numbers based on 2006 census data, "I think the number could be higher because many immigrants don't fill out census data." "(At our office), someone may take a few months before they decide to walk through our door, many of our people come by word of mouth so we try to leave our brochures everywhere."

"Many people in Rimouski know 'Madame Fozi' she is undeniably at the heart of making Rimouski and the Lower St. Lawrence a much warmer place for people who arrive from distant places."

again to complete a similar program offered at the cegep level. And while she passed with flying colours, jobs became scarce in 1994 as a result of a recession. Fozi still has bitter memories of these days because she desperately tried to integrate into the community and job force while raising two young children with no family support. The



Susan Woodfine and Mahnaz Fozi

Mahnaz Fozi's day is never the same and each request is different but that is what she loves about her job. Unlike English newcomers or many other immigrants, Fozi says the majority of their clientele can speak French but the challenge is still daunting. Many struggle with cultural adjustments but the biggest bone that immigrants and newcomers have, says Fozi, is getting their work credentials recognized by the Quebec government. And once again, Fozi knows what that is all about. She is a university-trained lab technician but none of her credentials were recognized by the province. Fozi hit the books

experience was hard because she was competing for a job in a tough economic climate and was often told that she didn't have any 'Québécois experience.' Fozi eventually found a new calling that many people are thankful for. After many months of volunteering, Mahnaz Fozi was able to get onboard with AIBSL and has helped to build the organisation into what it is today. She smiles and agrees that maybe her rough integration experience was a blessing in disguise.

Calendar of Events

February

Thursday, February 23rd – 2 p.m.

Movie afternoon at Metis Town Hall. Free admission.

Sunday, February 26th – 2 p.m.

So this is L.O.V.E.? Author event at the Maison de thé Bonté divine, 144 de la Cathédrale, Rimouski.

Information: jstremblay@heritagelsl.ca or 418-730-6336

March

Sunday, March 11th – 12 - 5 p.m.

Winter Wonderland at Les Jardins de Métis/Reford Gardens.

FREE ADMISSION! Information: info@jardinsdemetis.com or 418-775-2221

Thursday, March 15th – 2 p.m.

Movie afternoon at Metis Town Hall. Free admission.

Tuesday, March 20th – 3 - 7 p.m.

Open House for the new Health & Family Resource Center attached to the CLSL office, the community training room and the new CPE (bilingual daycare). At L'Envol school (30 du Couvent, East door)

Wednesday, March 21st – 7 p.m.

Heritage Lower St. Lawrence & Accueil et Intégration Bas-Saint-Laurent present:

Discovering Iran's History. Geography, culture and culinary delights!

Guest speaker: Gholamreza Mohamad At the Musée régional de Rimouski, 35 St-Germain O, Rimouski
Information: 418-723-1986, ext. 1595

April

Wednesday, April 4th – 1 p.m.

Walk Into Spring in Métis-sur-Mer. Step Together Community Walk (2,8km), 3rd edition. Starting point: L'Envol school (1 p.m.). We walk to the Metis Town Hall (370, Beach). Healthy snacks & door prizes.
Return trip bus available.

Plaisirs d'hiver

aux Jardins de Métis

Winter Wonderland

at Reford Gardens



Dimanche, 11 mars, midi à 17 h
Sunday, March 11th, noon to 5 pm
ENTRÉE GRATUITE / FREE ADMISSION

Raquette à partir de midi / Snowshoeing as of noon
Contes par / Storytelling by Albéric Gallant, *Empress of Ireland*
(14 h à 14 h 30 / 2 to 2:30 pm)
Chocolat chaud pour tous! / Hot chocolate for all!

Venez danser avec
Come and jig with **La Queue du Loup** 15 h à 17 h / 3 to 5 pm

Information: info@jardinsdemetis.com / 418-775-2221
Présenté par / Presented by

   

www.heritagelsl.ca  www.jardinsdemetis.com

HLSL Presents

in partnership with the Association socio-culturelle de Métis

Seniors Hot Lunches

March 13, 2012

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.



Photo Credits: Louis-Philippe Cusson

Above from front left: H el ene Paradis and Louise Lapierre, Lynn Fournier and Doreen Pearce.

Our Organisation

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Alexander Reford	President
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Facebook: [Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence](https://www.facebook.com/HeritageLowerSaintLawrence)



We are always looking for your ideas in our newsletter.
 Please email: jstremblay@heritagelsl.ca

Last word...

“Winter”

I like to play with snow
and hear the wind blow.

I like to eat cookies
and yummy yummy cookies.

I buy a Christmas tree with my
wonderful Mom, Susie.

Julia Dionne,
Grade 1, Metis Beach School