
Multilingual Association of Regina

JANUARY-MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER



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President's Message



I hope this message finds everyone enjoying the last few days of a very mild winter and looking forward to the Spring of 2016 and the conclusion of Heritage Language classes for the 2015-2016 school year. While the weather has been very mild over the past three months, the environment that MLAR has been in during this time has been very, very stormy.

The first storm that we faced was an impending doubling of the property tax to the building that MLAR occupies at 2144 Cornwall Street, from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00. MLAR is a member of the Saskatchewan Multicultural Centre Association which owns the building and has three positions on the six member board, with SOHL having the three remaining board positions. After a great deal of work by the SMCA board, by Site Manager Tamara Ruzic, and a presentation before the Finance Committee at the City of Regina, a three year tax exemption was granted. We had weathered the first storm.

The second storm, much more significant than the first, was the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's announcement of the cease of funding effective April 1st, 2016. The immediate impact upon MLAR was the loss of \$20,000.00 in flow through funding from the Ministry, through SOHL and into MLAR's bank account. This amount represents about 40% of

MLAR's total operating budget. The unknown impact at this time is regarding the additional funding that MLAR receives through SOHL, in the amount of \$10,000.00 per year. If SOHL withdraws this funding, MLAR will face an additional 20% loss in operating funds. The MLAR board will be meeting shortly to make adjustments to the 2016 – 2017 budget year. We do not want to make any cuts to our programming but with the belt tightening that will have to occur, I cannot promise that any of our programs are safe.

As they say, things come in three's. Well, today (March 15th) I received a very concerning email from Mike Walter, Deputy Director, School Services from the Regina Public School Board. At a time when I am requesting additional classroom space in a third Regina High School, our Heritage Language School members have been misusing classroom spaces, particularly at Balfour Collegiate, on a weekly basis. The situation has gotten to the point where the Balfour Collegiate Principal no longer wants the Heritage Language Program at her school! This is a relationship that has been ongoing for several decades and it is now hanging by a thread. I have a meeting with Mr. Walter, who decides MLAR's fate regarding classroom usage at the Regina high schools, in early April. I am hoping that I do not leave the meeting with bad news.

I beg all of Heritage Language Schools to treat Balfour and Campbell's classrooms as if they were your own home. If access to the high schools is lost, MLAR may cease to exist. Please ensure that your Heritage Language school isn't the reason for the loss of our privileged use of the classrooms! They say that the sun will come out after every bad storm, and I am hoping that MLAR will be able to see the sun in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Leskun, MLAR President

International Heritage Language Day 2016 Celebration

UNESCO declares “International Heritage Language Day” each February. To celebrate this day, a special event is organized each year by the Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Language (SOHL). This year SOHL held this event at Balfour on Saturday February 27th. Below are some photos taken that day including photos of special guests who brought greetings. Also included are photos of some of the on-stage performers who added practical reinforcement to some of the statements made by the special guest speakers, that “language is culture and culture is language – that the two are inseparable”.

Welcome and introduction of speakers and of on-stage performers was handled ably by the two EMCEES Kel-Leigh Kirnness and Elizabeth Engel.



The Honourable Ralph Goodale, Canada’s Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, was the first to bring greetings. He emphasized that our country Canada is stronger because of its support of Multiculturalism and Multilingualism and he also congratulated SOHL for its on-going work to promote Multilingualism in Saskatchewan.



Trent Wotherspoon, Saskatchewan’s Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition, also emphasized the importance of Multiculturalism and Multilingualism. He also said it was very unfortunate that the present Saskatchewan Government has informed SOHL that the government will no longer provide funding in support of the Heritage Language Schools in this province. He said he was hopeful that at a meeting planned in a few days, Saskatchewan will re-assess that unwise decision and agree to continue funding this program through SOHL and MLAR.



Dr Barbara Young, Deputy Mayor, brought greetings on behalf of the City of Regina. She stated that the City is proud to support the work of SOHL and of the Multilingual Association of Regina (MLAR) by working with the Regina Public School System to provide free access to classrooms for the teaching of Heritage Languages in Regina, currently at two Collegiats, Balfour and Campbell.



Adrian Halter, SaskCulture Vice-President, was next to bring greetings. SaskCulture has been providing grants in support of the teaching of Heritage Languages in Saskatchewan for a number of years and plans are to continue to support the teaching of Heritage Languages as well as provide financial assistance to a wide range of organizations that work in support of Saskatchewan's cultural diversity.



Girma Sahlu, President of SOHL, thanked all of the above for attending this celebration of languages. He also expressed serious concern about the decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to discontinue funding the Heritage Language Program in this province. He said he found it difficult to understand such a decision in the light of the fact that Canada is accepting thousands of refugees to this country and government support of Heritage Languages is a very important way of welcoming them to this country.

On-Stage Cultural Performances

Pictured below, the first on-stage performance was by the Bangla School of Regina. They were the first on stage as Bangladesh was instrumental in the decision by UNESCO to proclaim International Heritage Language Day every February.



A very attention-getting performance by the Regina Hibiki Taiko Japanese group sponsored by the Queen City Japanese Language School kept the audience on its toes as they performed two songs supported by distinct sounds from their Japanese Taiko Drums.



The Ethiopian Language School presented a dance called Eskista and Buna, a famous Ethiopian traditional dance accompanied by a Buna coffee ceremony, a traditional event in Ethiopian culture.



There were many other excellent performances, but unfortunately there is not enough space to include all in this edition of MLAR's quarterly newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MLAR'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MLAR will be holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Heritage Language Teacher Award Night on MAY 2, 2016 at the Travelodge, Albert Street South, with registration starting at 6:00 pm, and the reports to the membership which will include a report on MLAR'S audited financial statements for the full fiscal year 2015-2016 starting at 6:30 pm. MLAR language school representatives are asked to please come early and attend this meeting at which time the printed Annual Report will be presented.

LANGUAGE TEACHERS AWARD NIGHT

MLAR sponsors a Heritage Language Teachers' Award Night annually to give some recognition to the dedicated work of its many volunteer heritage language teachers. This year this will be held on May 2, starting at 7:00 pm at the Travelodge on Albert Street South. Awards will be based on the number of years of experience teaching a heritage language. A bronze pin will be awarded for 3 to 4 years of teaching. A Silver pin will be awarded for 5 to 9 year of teaching experience. A Gold pin will be awarded for 10 or more years of teaching experience. The evening will also include some on-stage cultural entertainment as well as a sumptuous buffet. There is no registration fee for all active heritage language teachers and principals. It is important that all persons who pre-register actually attend as MLAR must guarantee payment for a fixed number for the buffet at least 3 days before May 2nd. If anyone who has pre-registered is unable to attend, please ensure that MLAR office is so notified by email at mlar@accesscomm.ca to help avoid overpayment to the Travelodge.

The Multilingual Association of Regina (MLAR) gratefully acknowledges **funding assistance** from **SaskCulture Inc., Saskatchewan Lotteries, Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages, (SOHL) Saskatchewan Education.**

Dates CAMPBELL NOT AVAILABLE

A reminder that **Campbell Collegiate** will **NOT BE AVAILABLE** for Heritage Language School Usage for the balance of the 2015-2016 school year as follows:

March 25 to April 3 (Good Friday, Easter Monday)

May 23, 2016 (Victoria Day holiday)

LAST SCHOOL DAY: June 17, 2016
Campbell not available during Summer Holidays

Dates BALFOUR NOT AVAILABLE

A reminder that **Balfour Collegiate** will **NOT BE AVAILABLE** for Heritage classes as follows for the balance of the 2014-2015 school year as follows:

March 25 to April 3 (Good Friday, Easter Monday)

May 23, 2016 (Victoria Day holiday)

LAST SCHOOL DAY: June 17, 2016
Balfour not available during Summer Holidays



**Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Education**



**Saskatchewan Organization
for Heritage Languages**