



# CANADIAN LANGUAGE MUSEUM MUSÉE CANADIEN DES LANGUES

## Membership Newsletter #4

Fall 2014

### Museum News

#### **New Exhibit about Cree!**

We have started work on the fourth travelling exhibit! It will be about the Cree language and will open in Spring 2015. We are pleased to be working again with students from the Master of Museum Studies Program at the University of Toronto in the development of this exhibit. Kevin Brosseau, the Cree Language Coordinator at Anischaaukamikw, the Cree Cultural Institute in central Québec, is overseeing the exhibit's content. Meanwhile the other three exhibits continue to tour the country. Consult our website for current and upcoming exhibit locations.

#### **Check out our Blog!**

Michael Iannozzi started in September as our new Social Media Coordinator. He will be making weekly blog postings about a wide variety of topics related to the languages of Canada. Be sure to check his blog postings regularly on our website.

#### **Charitable Status!**

We are very excited to have received charitable status for the CLM. You can easily make a donation to support the museum's activities through our website and you will receive a tax receipt immediately. Remember, too, to renew your membership and invite your friends to become members too!

### Our Living Languages at Royal BC Museum

On June 21 – National Aboriginal Day – a new exhibition celebrating the 34 First Nations languages in British Columbia opened at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. *Our Living Languages: First Peoples' Voices in BC*, presented in partnership with the First Peoples' Cultural Council, features a number of innovative and interactive displays. These include a language forest of 17 double-sided metal pylons, with each side devoted to one language; an immersive language theatre for listening to untranslated lullabies and spoken words, whose exterior is woven with laminate strands to resemble a cedar root cradleboard; and a First Peoples' language map of BC. There are also a number of visual and audio art pieces by artists from British Columbia First Nations which reflect and embody First Peoples' languages, including carvings, weavings, and interactive sculptures. Factors which have disrupted First Peoples' languages are also presented, with a station discussing the effects of loss of land, the residential school system, and assimilation policies on language use. The exhibition will run through June 2017. For more information and to plan your visit, go to <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/our-living-languages/>.



### Meet our new Executive Assistant

Katharine Snider McNair is a recent graduate of the Museum Studies Master's program at the University of Toronto. She was one of the three students who worked on the production of the "Le français au Canada" exhibit, which opened in April. As the newly appointed Executive Assistant for the Canadian Language Museum, Katharine is passionate about helping the museum develop as both as a steward of languages and champion for intangible heritage in Canada. Her professional experiences include Roberts Library, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Brunel's S.S. Great Britain, Campbell House Museum and the Juravinski Cancer Centre.

#### **Katharine's Thoughts on the Museum:**

Museums today are situated in a very interesting place. The traditional role of the museum is shifting from presenting high culture artifacts to a more inclusive, socially responsible model, which aims to connect people with ideas, stories, history, and artifacts. The nature of the Canadian Language Museum is intriguing in that it focuses on a subject that is inherently ephemeral and at the same time central to connecting people to one another. For me, the vast possibility of what the museum can accomplish, given the tools available to us today, is fascinating. I'm very excited to be part of the CLM team!

**Check out our website:** [www.languagemuseum.ca](http://www.languagemuseum.ca)  
**See us on Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/clm.mcl>  
**CLM on CafePress:** <http://www.cafepress.ca/clmmcl>



### Newsletter Team

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### Endangered Languages in Toronto

Readers will most likely know that Toronto is a hotbed for languages from around the world. Over 200 languages are spoken in Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Some of these languages are endangered globally. The Endangered Language Alliance Toronto, modelled after their sister organization in New York City, was formed as a response to the linguistic diversity in the GTA. Their mission is to document endangered and under-described languages through audio and video recordings of speakers in the GTA, to support community-led preservation and education initiatives, and to celebrate the linguistic diversity of our city while raising awareness of the global endangered language crisis. Some of their current projects involve Bukhori, a Southwest Iranian language spoken by Bukharian Jews, Urhobo, a language of Southern Nigeria, Cellese, a variety of Franco-Provençal spoken in southern Italy, and Harari, a language of the Harar region in eastern Ethiopia. If you speak an endangered language or know of a community member in the GTA that may be interested in a documentation project, please contact ELAT. (<http://elalliance.com/>)

### Spotlight on Onondaga

Onondaga is an Iroquoian language spoken primarily in Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario and in central New York State. It is spoken by the Onondaga First Nation, one of the original members of the Iroquois Confederacy. It is a highly endangered language, currently being rescued from the brink of extinction by revitalization efforts. A striking property of Onondaga is the complexity of its words. In the following example, fact indicates an event known to be true, rep indicates a repeated event, and punc indicates an event that is over and done with.

waʔshanəhəyəθwaʔ  
waʔ-s-ha-nəh-yəθw-aʔ  
fact-rep-he-corn-plant-punc  
“He planted corn again.”

As readers may well know, the name *Canada* comes from the closely related, but extinct language, Laurentian. Visitors wishing to catch a glimpse of Iroquoian lifestyle in times gone by can visit Ska-na-doh-t near London, Ont., the name of which means ‘the village stands again’. This name contains -oht, meaning roughly ‘there’ and the s- prefix we saw above meaning ‘again’. Take those word bits away and you’re left with something closely resembling the name *Canada*, meaning ‘village’. If you want to hear some Onondaga, here is a video of a young man reciting the Thanksgiving Address.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xlj\\_m5p5n0E&list=UUZ3N\\_JD5IGhwS9w9Vr44Agw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xlj_m5p5n0E&list=UUZ3N_JD5IGhwS9w9Vr44Agw)