

Winnipeg, 2013 – HKVCA Bi-Annual General Meeting - Education Report

At the last AGM in Granby, Pat Turcotte from Ontario Region delivered the National Education Report in her capacity as Acting National Education Chair. Immediately following that meeting, I volunteered to run the Translation Project for the Teachers' Zone (TZ) that Pat had begun to promote, knowing that I had access to support from professional contacts in technical writing, editing, and translation, as well as support from IBM and their strong endorsement of volunteerism. The following year, I took the role of National Education Chair. Details follow.

General

1. IBM Community Grants:
 - a. 2011: Because Mike Babin is an IBM retiree, he is eligible to apply for a community grant based on his many donated hours to the HKVCA. I gave him forms and we were given \$500.
 - b. 2012: By creating a team of over 25 volunteers (IBMers, retired IBMers, and HKVCA members) working on the translation of the TZ, I was able to apply for and receive a grant for \$3000.
 - c. 2013: I am preparing a submission for another grant for \$1500.
2. Volunteers: I have seen how the support from non-HKVCA members can make a tremendous difference in the work we've accomplished. Too often we think we need to do things by ourselves, understandably the product of a long and arduous fight by our veterans who absolutely had to operate on the strength of their own membership. However, times have changed and as we have charitable status, the spirit of volunteerism in our country is perhaps a poorly tapped resource.

Writing contest

3. Effective 2013-2014 school year, funding of the Writing Contest cash prizes has moved from the Ontario Region's budget to the National budget to better reflect the national character of this very important annual event.
4. Pat Turcotte has retired from her role as chair of the annual Writing Contest. We all owe her tremendous thanks for her energy and vision that got the Writing Contest going and built the momentum into what it is today. Details are part of the Ontario Report this year, and examples of the submissions are on display in the memorabilia room.
5. Emmie Flanagan from Atlantic Region has stepped up to take on the Writing Contest responsibilities for the coming school year. The idea is that this role will rotate among the regions, as this is truly a National program. No one should be expected to take this and keep it indefinitely. I ask each of you to consider this role, and if you are interested, approach Emmie so that she can think of you as potential understudies.

Teachers' Zone (TZ)

6. Following this meeting, and after a short break, I will be presenting our updated TZ website. If you are interested in getting a sneak preview before it goes into production, I encourage you to return to this room for a detailed presentation.
7. Except for the 10 Lessons, all of the TZ was assessed for impact, ease of translation, suitability, and usability. Content that for translation was edited, translated, and posted. This process identified missing information, which I wrote, and in some cases I uncovered new material on other sites that we could include.
8. In January 2012, Derrill Henderson gave a presentation to the New Brunswick Ministry of Education, arranged by Emmie Flanagan. The goal was to obtain their endorsement of our material for use in their classrooms. They were encouraging, and provided some detailed requirements. Subsequently I worked with Sylvie Lebel to develop a detailed understanding of their French language requirements. The TZ has been reviewed by Sylvie Lebel and team, and we have their endorsement based on what they saw at that time. Our work was not complete, so once we are live in production, they will be notified.
9. IBM volunteers of note: *Tom Lee*, a technical writer in Ottawa has been a steady supporter, working on the website updates as we translate the TZ, learning HTML skills as he goes. *Guy Lacoursière*, an ex-French translator and now Globalization Consultant in Ottawa, provided valuable professional advice. *Stephen Keppel-Jones*, a programmer I met through my IBM Toastmasters club, learned and implemented the coding needed to flip back and forth between English and French. *Randy Chafy*, *Ron Ferguson*, and *Beth Roodman*, all in Ottawa, have provided technical editing services because nothing should be translated until after it has been professionally edited. Also in Ottawa, *Jenny Chanfooktin*, a French translator, donated her time to translate. *Jennifer Grant*, a business consultant in New York, donated several hours to create a comprehensive test plan. *Laura Soledad Kippes*, a project manager in Argentina, has just joined the team and has offered Tom some technical assistance. *Laura* and *Yee Mun Lai*, in Malaysia, have a background in web design, and will be working with me on future design updates, in consultation with our incomparable Jim Trick.

Other educational initiatives

10. We used to have one newsletter a year that was focused on educational content. Because education is a key part of our mission and every day is an opportunity to further than mission, each newsletter has an educational article. It's not just once a year.
11. Promotion of Educational Packages for high school teachers. Knowing that personal connections are always compelling, at parent-teacher interviews I provide packages to my children's history teachers. These packages contain information about the Writing Contest and the DVD "Telling the Story" among other handouts. I briefly describe the battle, my family story, and the contents of the package. This has always been well received, and was the subject of a newsletter article. I encourage everyone to do this.

12. Toastmasters speeches. In the last 4 years, I've given 3 different speeches on different elements of the Battle of Hong Kong – the last one on Gander. The opportunities for all of us to support the educational mandate of the HKVCA are all around us. What can you do in your community?

Some ideas that need a champion

13. Social Media – we have a Facebook group; can we use it better? I have ideas for Twitter as well.
14. Archival/library/records support
15. Building an editorial board
16. Building a advisory panel of teachers.
17. Social media – find a younger (grandchild?) member to manage a twitter account. Each veteran's birthday, date of death, battle events, etc can all be tweeted on their anniversaries with links to our website or veterans stories in particular.
18. Tweaking the Opening Protocol text for fit as a way to encourage students to hold their own "ceremony".
19. Like all sites, the TZ needs new content added regularly. Be on the look out for new material to link in.
20. The main audience of the TZ is high school history teachers. The next evolution of the TZ needs to broaden its audience to include others, such as homeschoolers, private tutors. Homeschooling alone in Canada is estimated at 70,000 students and growing. Can you find such people to act as test users?

Respectfully submitted,

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