

Tartan Day celebrations

SUBMITTED BY MAJOR ALAN STAIRS, OC, QUEBEC CITY 78TH FRASER HIGHLANDERS - FORT ST. ANDREW'S GARRISON

April 6 is Tartan Day. It's a day to honour our Scottish heritage, to celebrate the spirit and character of our Scottish ancestors and to recognise their contributions to our culture and way of life.

Canadians can take pride in being the originators of Tartan Day. In 1986, at a meeting of the Federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia, a motion was passed to "establish a day known as Tartan Day, this to be a day chosen to promote Scottish heritage by the most visible means." Between 1987 and

2003, April 6, Tartan Day became officially recognised by all provincial legislatures. In 2004, the US House of Representatives recognised the day. In Scotland that same year, the Angus County Council became the first council in Scotland to celebrate Tartan Day.

Angus is the home of Arbroath Abbey, where on April 6, 1320, the Declaration of Arbroath was signed. A group of noblemen, in a letter to Pope John XXII, declared Scotland to be an independent sovereign nation and insisted on their right to self-government. One of its most often-quoted passages reads: ". . . for, as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought

under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself."

On Saturday, April 6, an informal get-together was held at the Pub St-Alexandre on rue St-Jean. If you weren't able to be there, I encourage each and every one of you to reflect on the hardships endured by our Scottish forebears and the contributions they made to our province and country. Listen to some of your favorite bagpipe tunes, wear some Tartan and last but not least, have a "wee dram" in honour of all things Scottish.



Photo by Ted Gunn

Ted Gunn reported, "We had a great time; there were 24 people present, several of them in kilts or showing off tartan, all very happy to be at the Pub St-Alexandre with friends. And the beverages and food were enjoyable."

Adult Learners' Week celebrates lifelong learning

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Adult Learners' Week (April 6-14, 2013) was established by UNESCO in 2000, and was officially endorsed by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in 2002. In the eleven intervening years, Adult Learner's Week (also known in Quebec as the Semaine québécoise des adultes en formation) has offered an opportunity to increase public awareness, build partnerships, and enhance policymakers' understanding of the importance of lifelong learning.

Literacy Volunteers of Quebec (LVQ), a provincial coalition of community literacy organizations, points out that "learning to read, taking a professional development course, or taking up a new hobby are all examples of lifelong learning." These and many other approaches to learning throughout one's life are key to quality of life in personal, professional and civic spheres.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO states, "Inclusive education is fundamental to the achievement of human, social and economic development [...] There can be no exclusion arising from age, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, language..." According to the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) (www.nald.ca), International Adult Learners' Week founders "understood that the most effective way to underscore the importance of lifelong learning was to give adult learners themselves the chance to express their views, describe their challenges, and document their success stories."

In Canada, this initiative is based on nearly 80

years of work by Canadians focused on adult education; the Canadian Association for Adult Education was founded in 1935. According to NALD, the CAAE's second president later served as the chairman of UNESCO's International Committee for the Advancement of Adult Education and served as the "founding chair of Canada's first Department of Adult Education, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education."

Canadians were also instrumental in the establishment of the International Council for Adult Education, which was founded in the 1970s as an "international partnership of individuals and organizations whose mission is to promote adult learning as an important tool for informed participation in civil society and sustainable development."

Closer to home, LVQ states that "Literacy is not just about reading, writing and counting. It also means having basic educational and life skills – skills that enable people to understand the world around them, to make informed decisions, and to participate actively in society. Keeping these skills up-to-date requires on-going formal and informal learning – lifelong learning – from which all adults can benefit."

Here in Quebec City, a LVQ member organization, the Quebec City Reading Council, offers a number of learning opportunities for adults. QCRC initiatives for adults include the Lifelong Learning Program (a community collaboration for seniors), one-on-one tutoring for literacy students, and essential skills training for individuals seeking to enhance their life and workplace skills.

The QCT recently spoke



Photo courtesy of Quebec City Reading Council

In one of many adult workshops, QCRC program participants focus on creative expression.

with one such adult learner. Odette M. said she has been participating in the QCRC's essential skills program since autumn 2012, where she is honing skills necessary to enter Eastern Quebec Learning Centre's nursing assistance program. Originally from Rwanda, Odette described the difference between her educational experiences in the two countries.

She said, "In Rwanda,

we didn't have a choice. We had an exam in grade 8. The education minister would then place you where you were thought to be best. It is not like here, where you can choose." She continued, "I was told to study to be an accountant. I didn't like it, but you know, you have to study. There was no way to go to school without doing what you were told. The whole country took the exam, and only the ones with the

best marks could go to high school. For the country's two universities, it was the same. You apply, and then you were told what to study."

Odette noted, "It was here in Canada that I realized I could do anything. I don't remember when I thought of being a nurse. When I moved to Quebec, I realized I could afford to go back to school." She added, "I like tutoring with QCRC because I can come when I am available.

And, in one hour, I learn a lot. I can recommend it to people who don't have time to go to school."

More information about local adult continuing education programs can be found by contacting Eastern Quebec Learning Centre (418 654-0537; www.easternquebec.ca) or the Quebec City Reading Council (418-681-1258; www.qcrc.org).

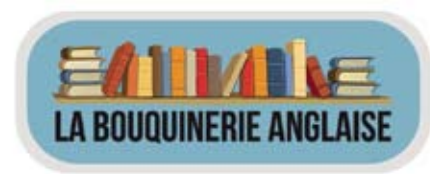


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