



CANADIAN LANGUAGE MUSEUM MUSÉE CANADIEN DES LANGUES

Membership Newsletter #2

October 2013

Marie Côté: Of Vessels and Voices / Jeux de bols et de voix

Elaine Gold

'Speaking the Inuit Way' was displayed at the Canadian Gallery of Clay and Glass in Waterloo, Ontario from June 27 to September 1. This was a unique opportunity for the Canadian Language Museum to have an exhibit paired with an art exhibition. The show *Marie Côté: Of Vessels and Voices / Jeux de bols et de voix* included ceramic pieces, clay drawings on paper and a sound installation. Quebec artist Marie Côté created the sound installation in Inukjuak, Nunavik, based on sounds made by eight Inuit throat singers singing into porcelain bowls she had made. Conversations between the singers are also included in the installation. Curator Christian Bernard Singer felt that the information about the Inuit language in 'Speaking the Inuit Way' complemented the artworks well, and the sound installation provided a wonderful ambience for the language exhibit.



Honorary Patron: Tomson Highway

Elaine Gold

We are very excited to announce that Tomson Highway has agreed to be an Honorary Patron for the Canadian Language Museum. Tomson Highway is an award-winning playwright, novelist and musician. His mother tongue is Cree, he learned Dene as a child and speaks English and French fluently. He has been awarded the

Aboriginal Achievement Award, the Order of Canada and eight honorary doctorates. You can learn more about Tomson Highway's extraordinary accomplishments at his website tomsonhighway.com

New in Print

Richard Compton

An important recent contribution to the description of Inuktitut is Louis-Jacques Dorais' (2010) *The Language of the Inuit: Syntax, Semantics, and Society in the Arctic*. This book provides a highly accessible introduction to the structure of Inuktitut, covering a number of dialect differences while also focusing on the varieties spoken in Arctic Quebec. In addition to providing a grammatical description of the language, Dorais examines the language from historical and social perspectives.



Exhibit news

Canadian English, Eh?

• Oct 7-18: Gerstein Library, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

Speaking the Inuit Way

Recent shows:

• June 27-Sep 1: Canadian Gallery of Clay and Glass, Waterloo, ON

• Oct 2-4: 272 Residence Commons, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON (Foundation for Endangered Languages Conference)

• Oct 28-Nov 8: Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association conference, Moncton, NB (theme: Native American and Aboriginal Languages and Cultures)

Coming shows:

• Nov 18-29: St. Mary's University, Halifax, NS

• Jan 13-24: Gerstein Library, University of Toronto

• Feb 3-14: York Hall, Glendon Campus, York University, Toronto, ON

Canadian French

We are currently working on our third exhibit to open in March 2014. Prof. France Martineau, Université d'Ottawa and Prof. André Thibault, Université de Paris-Sorbonne are developing the content, and three students from the Master of Museum Studies program at the University of Toronto are curating the exhibit: Kaetlen Bursey, Robyn Bosnyak and Katharine Snider. The exhibit will open at the University of Toronto, and there are already plans for it to travel to the University of Western Ontario, Brock University, St Catharines, and Université de Moncton.

Newsletter Team

Content: Michael Barrie, Sogang University; Jennifer Abel, University of British Columbia; Richard Compton and Elaine Gold, University of Toronto,

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



Language in, like, the news: What do you think of 'like'?

Jennifer Abel

In a September 5, 2013 *Globe and Mail* column, Canadian writer Russell Smith joined the debate over non-standard uses of the word 'like'. Smith was commenting on two August 2013 blog posts: one by English professor Paula Marantz Cohen at *The American Scholar*, and one by *Slate* assistant editor Katy Waldman. Cohen characterized 'like' as a "comfort word", which "cushions the force of an idea or [acknowledges] an approximation of meaning". Waldman, following up on Cohen's piece, added that 'like' can help to achieve "an emotional accuracy that would not be possible if you insisted on speaking literally".

In response, Smith wrote, "It seems so much more sensible to be flexible about the evolution of language, to respect its irrational ties as charming and [...] meaningful. But not one of these arguments is convincing to me." Instead, Smith described 'like' as "verbal spam", and highlighted its absence in Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have A Dream' speech as evidence that non-standard uses simply aren't necessary. He concluded that "we do in fact already live in an ideal world in which language is capacious and precise enough to express anything we want."

What do you think of the changing use of 'like'? Do you cringe when it's used non-standardly? Do you enthusiastically use it in all the same places a teenager would? Or are you somewhere in between? Share your thoughts on the Canadian Language Museum's Facebook page (link at the bottom of the page) – and make sure to 'Like' it while you're there!

References (retrieved September 16, 2013)

Smith's article: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/the-defenders-of-like-as-verbal-spam-try-hard-but-theyre-like-way-off-base/article14144450/>

Cohen's blog post: <http://theamericanscholar.org/in-defense-of-like/>

Waldman's blog post: http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/08/20/this_is_like_a_great_blog_post_you_should_you_know_totally_read_it.html

Canada's Linguistic Graveyard

Michael Barrie

Aboriginal languages in Canada from coast to coast face the threat of extinction. Fortunately for some, revitalization efforts are underway; however, others have not fared so well. Numerous languages have already become extinct, and many more are predicted to suffer the same fate. Beothuk was one of the first languages to disappear after European contact. Shanawdithit, the last speaker of Beothuk, died in 1829 in St. John's. Little is known of Beothuk today save for a few word lists recorded by missionaries. Today, Shanawdithit is commemorated by a statue near her original burial site.

Welcome Board of Directors

The following members were elected to the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting in June:

Chair: Elaine Gold, University of Toronto

Vice-Chair: Keren Rice, University of Toronto

Board Members:

Gerard Van Herk, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Brandon Fry, Université d'Ottawa

Mihaela Pirvulescu, University of Toronto
Mississauga

Alex Park, Shaw Communications, Calgary