



## **Hello CLM Members!**

First of all, we want to thank you. Our museum is small, but we have accomplished a lot in the past year. As we develop, it's important for us to let you know that your membership plays a critical a role in our ability to grow. It's so reassuring to know that there is a community of people rooting for us: people who believe in our mission and the role we can play in supporting Canadian languages and heritage.

Unlike other museums, we can't offer you free admission to our exhibits (they are always free for anyone to visit!), or behind the scenes tours of our operations (in case you're really curious, some of this newsletter was written on the GO commuter train), but we can assure you that **your participation matters**. As we move forward you might notice a few changes - for instance, new formats for email notifications and the newsletter. We will, of course,

continue to keep you up to date on our activities, and provide you with interesting language news and information. And because we know you are counting on us, we will also continue to champion language diversity, heritage languages, and language research in Canada.

So, what's been keeping us so busy? International Mother Language Day on February 21st marked our first outreach event at one of Toronto's public libraries. In April we launched our 4th travelling exhibit "Cree: The People's Language" and it has already begun its journey across the nation. On June 1st we moved into our new office in the historic George Brown House in Toronto and shortly after held our 2015 AGM. Soon, our Cree, Inuit and French exhibits will be featured at the Aboriginal Pavilion during the 2015 PanAm Games!

We hope you are as excited as we are about what's been going on!

If you ever have ideas, questions or concerns please don't hesitate to get in touch. Members are always encouraged to share their experience and knowledge with us.

Until next time,

Elaine Gold  
*Chair*

Katharine Snider McNair  
*Executive Assistant*



**A note about George Brown House:**

On June 1st the Canadian Language Museum moved into its first office space since its founding in 2011. The historic **George Brown House**, built in 1876, was the home of

Senator George Brown, a Father of Confederation and founder of The Globe newspaper. Today it is managed by the Ontario Heritage Trust and houses the Ontario Museums Association, Literature for Life, Broken Pencil, and many other non-profit organizations. While the idea of a “museum without walls” was highly relevant to an organization built around intangible heritage, it turns out we did need some walls for public engagement, development, and storage. We look forward to working out of this beautiful heritage building!

You can visit our new space by appointment. Contact us to arrange a visit.

**Address:**

**Phone:** 647 785-1012

Canadian Language Museum  
George Brown House  
50 Baldwin Street, Toronto, Ontario

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### 2015 AGM Update

We are very pleased to announce the new members of the Canadian Language Museum Board.

Marcia Zuker  
Mireille Tremblay  
Heather Bliss

These new board members each bring valuable and unique skills to our organization and we are thrilled to have them joining us. You can have a look at their biographies on our website. Thank you to outgoing board members Mihaela Pirvulescu, Keren Rice and Gerard Van Herk, for their years of commitment to the CLM, and thank you to Alex Park who has taken on the position of Vice-Chair. At this year’s AGM the board made a commitment to create a new 5-year plan and to undertake fundraising initiatives in the coming year.

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### Cree: The People’s Language

On March 25 we held the opening of the CLM’s fourth exhibit, which is about Cree, the most widely spoken Aboriginal language in Canada. “Cree: The People’s Language” features six colourful panels containing maps, photos and information on topics including the syllabic writing system, word formation, animacy, and the future of Cree. There are also audio clips featuring Cree speakers and dialects from across Canada.



At New College at the University of Toronto, faculty, students, museum members and the public gathered to view the exhibit. Kevin Brousseau,

the Cree Language Coordinator for the Cree Nation Government and primary content consultant, said a few words about the exhibit and Brenda Wastasecoot, a Swampy Cree author from Churchill, Manitoba, read from her children's book "Granny's Giant Bannock."

This exhibit was developed with the assistance of University of Toronto Masters of Museum Studies students Juliana Rock and Ann Snook.

If you would like to read more about the opening you can check out Kevin Brousseau's blog [here](#).

If you are interested in having this exhibit visit your institution please contact us!



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### **North in the South, 'Speaking the Inuit Way' exhibited at Hamilton hospital**

Hospitals are hives of people – patients, families, health professionals - with interesting and unique stories. This 'slice of humanity' was the inspiration behind a Hamilton art exhibit and fundraiser that took place at the Juravinski Cancer Centre from January to March: "North in the South: A Tribute to the Arctic". This exhibition encouraged viewers to think about the variety of ways individuals experience and relate to the world. The JCC is home to a wide array of artwork, including a large collection of Inuit sculpture. This is especially poignant as in the 1950s hundreds of Inuit were brought to southern hospitals for treatment of tuberculosis.

The Canadian Language Museum was honoured to have "Speaking the Inuit Way" on display as a tool to encourage thoughtfulness and engagement in this unique environment. Language barriers were just one of the challenges endured by Inuit patients during Canada's mid-century treatment programs. While our society has come a long way since then, there remain improvements to be made in how we care for one another. By honestly sharing our languages, culture, and values, across all situations, we can improve our shared capacity for

empathy.

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## Truth and Reconciliation

This month the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published its findings following a six-year mandate in which more than 6 750 Residential School survivors and witnesses were interviewed. The findings include important “calls to action” for key stakeholders and organizations in the social, cultural and political industries in Canada. Please take some time to read more about the Commission and view the report. You can find this information [here](#). The museum considers this information a valuable resource that will help guide our own actions. A core aspect of our mission as an organization is:

*To facilitate dialogue on fundamental language issues that are at the heart of the future of Canadian society, such as bilingualism, multilingualism, language endangerment, preservation and revitalization.*

Residential Schools and their aftermath are a devastating part of Canadian history. The CLM will continue to advocate for all languages, including the diverse and varied Aboriginal languages that exist across the country. We will continue to form positive, meaningful relationships with our local and national communities. We will continue to seek out expert partners, community advisors and like-minded groups to assist us with our goals. Finally, we will work toward educating the public about languages in a way that encourages tolerance, understanding and harmony between all people.

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### Language Spotlight: Blackfoot

By: Heather Bliss  
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The Blackfoot language is spoken throughout Southern Alberta and into Montana, and consists of four mutually intelligible dialects – Siksiká, Kainai (/Blood), and Aapátohsipikani (/Northern Peigan), and Aamsskáápipikani (/Southern Piegan, or Blackfeet). Blackfoot is the westernmost member of the Algonquian language family, which extends all across North America and includes Mi’gmaq, Cree and Ojibwe dialects, and various other languages. Due to close similarities in the vocabulary and morphosyntax of many Algonquian languages, Proto-Algonquian has been reconstructed with considerable success. However, Blackfoot’s place in the family remains unclear, and Blackfoot is often thought to be the most divergent Algonquian language.



Like its sister languages, Blackfoot is polysynthetic; words are richly inflected and a complete sentence can be comprised of just a single word. What stands out about Blackfoot is the degree of polysynthesis: Blackfoot has just three word classes - nouns, verbs, and demonstratives – and all other categories including adjectives, prepositions, pronouns, and quantifiers are expressed as affixes. Demonstratives, which in many languages form a small closed class (e.g., English has only four: this, that, these, those), are morphologically complex in Blackfoot, and there are 900 unique demonstrative forms. Another typologically interesting property of Blackfoot is that there are pronouns that can encode information about time (“me” versus “me at a particular point-in-time”).

With a reported number of 3350 first language speakers, Blackfoot is in the top ten in terms of number of speakers of an Aboriginal language in Canada. However, only a small percentage of these speakers report speaking Blackfoot most often at home, and an even smaller percentage are under 45 years old. Nevertheless, the outlook is optimistic: there are programs to teach Blackfoot in schools and colleges, and language revitalization efforts are growing. Preserving this language is vital for both linguistic and cultural reasons.

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### Social Media Links & Blog Note

Our social media coordinator Michael Iannozzi has been busy this year keeping up with interviews, blogging, tweeting and sharing all kinds of language news and info with the online universe. Show him some love by connecting with us on social media or sharing our **blog posts** with your friends and colleagues!



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