

Interaction



What a March That Was, by Mary Anne Murphy and Frances Ennis. Photo by Mary Anne Murphy. Story on page 9.

Spring 2008, Issue 36 Newsletter for Canada Revenue Agency employees

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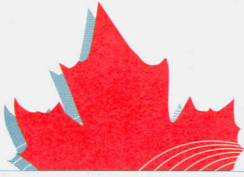
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From the regions

A thousand words

By Connie Chan, Corporate Programs, Burnaby-Fraser TSO

Surrey — Last January, the Employment Equity (EE) Committee at the Burnaby-Fraser TSO organized a photo contest, calling on employees to expose their inner shutterbugs and capture images that reflect the theme “Understanding = Harmony.” We were looking for photographs depicting diversity in our communities and workplace, with a focus on EE designated groups: Aboriginals, visible minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

The response was extremely encouraging! Sixteen entries were hung for viewing in the “link”—a hallway joining the BFTSO with the Surrey TC. Then the online voting was opened. A total of 277 employees cast votes for their favourite photos, demonstrating a widespread interest in and enjoyment of these images of diversity and harmony. The five winning photos were enlarged and framed, and they are now showcased in our office as well as posted on our TSO’s website for all to see. Check them out! When it comes to promoting understanding of one another’s cultures, activities and experiences, a picture is truly worth a thousand words.



Kevin Morgan (Audit) submitted this winning photo of Fraser Valley Métis Nation members and family relations at the 2006 “Pulling Together Canoe Journey,” held at Lacarno Beach in Vancouver.



Left to right: HHMAC choir members Sheila Feaver, Helen Marie Roche, Joan Dawe and Ann Newhook at the official unveiling of the rug collection at St. John’s City Hall.

Hooked on history

By Ann Thacker, editor

St. John’s — On the evening of June 30, 1916, the soldiers of the 1st Newfoundland Regiment sang “Keep the Home Fires Burning” in unison as they set out from Louvencourt on the march to Beaumont-Hamel, France. The next morning, chins tucked into shoulders as if walking into a blizzard back home, they advanced into point-blank German fire at the Battle of the Somme. In less than half an hour, the regiment was annihilated. Of the original 801 soldiers, only 68 stood to answer the roll call the next day. On July 1, 2008, more than 90 years after their terrible sacrifice, **Ann Newhook** (SR&ED, Newfoundland and Labrador TSO) and the Holy Heart of Mary Alumnae Choir (HHMAC) will pick up their refrain in a commemorative ceremony at the battle site.

Ann, whose uncle was a stretcher bearer for the Newfoundland Regiment in World War I, is honoured by the invitation to sing in France. “Beaumont-Hamel is very significant to Newfoundlanders,” she says, “A lot of families were affected, and they still mark July 1 as Memorial Day.” During their 14-day European tour, the all-women choir will also perform in Dresden, Prague, and several other venues.

In March 2007, the choir came up with a novel idea to raise funds for the trip. “Four of the women were into rughooking,” explains Ann, “and they offered to teach the craft to the rest of the choir. The original plan was to come up with a few mats for an auction or a raffle, but the project really took off!” Inspired by *I Remain, Your Loving Son*, a documentary film based on correspondence between Newfoundland soldiers, their families and friends, the women designed and hooked a series of 25 “rugs” that tell the war story from a female perspective. True to tradition, they hooked on burlap using recycled materials: old T-shirts, wool pants and velour house coats. In one image, a mother sits on a rocking chair reading a letter from her son far away. In another, a soldier lies in the trenches reading news from his mother back home. It soon became obvious that the ladies were dealing not with a few raffle items, but with a tapestry collection of historical significance. The rugs had to stay together!

With corporate and private sponsorship, the collection has been on display in the St. John’s and Mount Pearl city halls, other public buildings and art galleries. The HHMAC performs at these venues to attract spectators and increase public support for the project. This June, the choir will donate the tapestries to the newly renovated War Veterans’ Pavilion in St. John’s, where they will hang as a lasting tribute to the soldiers and families affected by the tragedy of Beaumont-Hamel.

You can see a selection of rugs from the collection in our online photo gallery and on the cover of this issue of Interaction.