

# Looking Back, Moving Forward

Dear Members,

What a tremendous year it has been for VEQ. Apart from its regular programming, the organization carried out a number of events as part of the Quebec City 400th Celebrations. It has been a great pleasure for me to watch the VEQ staff, with help from the Board of Directors, carry out such wonderful work.

We pushed forward on a number of fronts last year. For example, the Newcomers' Service made great progress. We held several social events and information sessions targeting the newest members of our community, and judging from the reports of the participants, VEQ's efforts were very much appreciated.

VEQ was active on other fronts, as well. We conducted a series of professional development workshops that were attended by dozens of community members. VEQ continued building on its close ties with the local Chambre de Commerce on employment and youth issues. As well, we collected over 500 names on a petition asking Global Television to live up to its commitments to the local English-speaking community.

The VEQ events on the May long weekend will stand out as some of the biggest successes the organization has ever known. On the Friday night, over

250 people attended a Meet and Greet at Les Voûtes du Cavour restaurant. Participants were entertained by the very talented local duo Bette and

Highlanders, VEQ put on a quite a show. Thanks go to the representatives from the over 20 community groups that also participated in this wonderful community showcase.



**VEQ President John Klassen**

Wallet, the sounds of which were carried to all four corners of the province by CBC radio, broadcasting live from the event.

The Sunday Community Festival at the Ursulines school was also a huge success. Hundreds of people attended. Most impressive was the overwhelming number of young people at the event. With inflatables, basketball clinics, face-painting and clowns, a scavenger hunt, and live performances from the Fraser

The VEQ Gala will long remain in the collective consciousness of our community. Over 700 guests wine and dined, danced, and laughed for the better part of six hours at the Convention Centre. Richard Walling, a long-time member of our community, is on record as saying that no event in his lifetime has been staged like the Gala. I agree. Thanks to VEQ Board Member Stephen Burke for a wonderful job as MC and to the multitalented Patrick Tomlinson for his outstanding video presentation.

VEQ members should be proud of the work the organization has done over the past year. We continue to serve our community well.

I look forward to seeing many VEQ members at the upcoming Annual General Meeting. Let us celebrate together the many successes of our community in this, the 400th year of our fine city.

Warmest regards,

John Klassen  
President,  
Voice of English-speaking Québec

# VEQ Presents Birthday Cards to Mayor Labeaume

As part of the Gala dinner, VEQ President John Klassen presented Quebec City Mayor Régis Labeaume with two birthday cards to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the city. The mayor, who was visibly humbled by the gift, promised to show the cards to city council at the next meeting.

The idea of making a birthday card for the city came from the VEQ Youth Committee. Clara Dagenais a secondary four student at St. Patrick's High School designed the front image and VEQ employees Patrick Tomlinson and Matthew Anderson used Dagenais' drawing to make a 28 by 44 inch card.

Tomlinson then toured the three local



**John Klassen presents birthday cards to Mayor Labeaume**

English language high schools and collected over 1000 student signatures on the card. "We realized that this was such a good idea," says Tomlinson, "that we decided to print a second card for adults." The second card was signed by visitors to VEQ's Meet and Greet at

Les Voûtes du Cavour restaurant, at the VEQ 400th Community Festival, and by attendees of the VEQ Gala Dinner.

In total, the two cards contained birthday wishes from close to 2000 people.

# Volunteers, the Unsung Heros of the 400th Celebrations

By all accounts the VEQ 400th weekend celebrations were a total success. Close to 2000 people, from young people to seniors, attended the three VEQ events. Reviews from participants have been numerous and overwhelmingly positive.

However, what many people do not know is that the success of the 400th weekend is due to a two-year planning commitment on behalf of local volunteers.

Two committees are particularly responsible for the success of the VEQ weekend. The 400th Partnership Committee, with representatives from

several local organizations, began meeting in September 2006 to organize a community wide celebration. The VEQ 400th Committee, made up of VEQ Board members, has also been integral in the planning and carrying out of the events.

Without doubt it is a testament to the community spirit of the various local organizations serving the English-speaking community that a community wide celebration could be undertaken in the first place.

Both English language high schools and the local English CEGEP all agreed to



**VEQ Board Members Dan Gross and Brigitte Wellens**

hold their events on the same day to make the weekend a special community wide initiative.

Help was also provided by these  
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# VEQ 400th Weekend Hailed A Success

From high school reunions, to meet and greets at local restaurants, to sports activities, face painting and scavenger hunts, to a ritzy soirée at the Convention Centre, the VEQ 400th weekend had something for everyone.

The 400th weekend began on Friday night at Les Voûtes du Cavour restaurant with a Meet and Greet open to the entire community. The space was generously donated by the owner Dario Gallese, a former student of Katimavik high school. Over 250 people attended the event, including over a dozen

the night.

After a full day of high school and CEGEP reunions, the community came together for a community festival on Sunday afternoon. Thankfully, the weather was perfect!

Literally hundreds of youngsters descended upon the Ursulines school to play on inflatables, in gymnasiums, and watch special performances by the 78th Fraser Highlanders.

Over 20 community groups participated in the community showcase at the festival. And three local churches, as well as the Morrin Centre, opened their doors for the VEQ Scavenger Hunt.

Even with a gold medal hockey game taking place close by, the community festival had nearly 1000 attendees.

Only two hours after the close of the community festival, 700 community members participated in a Gala Dinner and Dance at the Convention Centre. VEQ Board Member, Stephen Burke



**Katimavik alumnus reunited at the VEQ Meet and Greet**

kept everyone entertained throughout the evening, and guests heard from Mayor Régis Labeaume, Canada's Auditor General Sheila Fraser, and David Blair from the 400th Society over the course of the dinner.

VEQ treated guests with a delightful audio-video presentation on community spirit. Nearly 50 local community members contributed photographs, text, and video to the final draft of the presentation.

Special guest André-Philippe Gagnon did not disappoint. The Quebec entertainer had guests laughing and singing for close to 90 minutes. Gagnon treated the crowd with some new material and he delighted the audience with some of his classic numbers.



**Signing the VEQ birthday card at the community festival**

alumnus of Katimavik.

CBC radio broadcast live from the terrace of Les Voûtes du Cavour and local folk duo Bette and Wallet kept participants' feet tapping throughout

## Volunteer - continued from page 2

organizations, as well as the local English School Board, the Citadel Foundation, and prominent members of the community to organize a community festival, as well as the Gala Dinner and Dance.

Several VEQ Board Members, especially

Dan Gross and Brigitte Wellens, were instrumental in the success of the VEQ weekend. Gross and Wellens tirelessly provided support, whether it meant attending monthly meetings, responding to inquiries on the phone or by Internet, or by referring to their own network of contacts to get help.

VEQ Executive Director Helen Walling says the efforts of volunteers were the fuel that drove the success of the entire initiative. "The effort put forth by Dan and Brigitte was nothing short of impressive. The entire community owes them a debt of gratitude."



**Bringing the Community Together: Whether it was at the Meet and Greet Friday night, or at the Community Festival Sunday afternoon, the VEQ 400th Celebrations were all about bringing people together.**



**Community members, along with Quebec Premier André Philippe-Gagnon backstage at the**

# Celebration Roundup



ec City Mayor Régis Labeaume, meet  
e VEQ Gala Dinner and Dance.

# VEQ Makes Strong Gains on Employment Issues!

## Multilingual Zone

This year VEQ held a leadership role in the Multilingual Zone during the 2008 Quebec City Foire de l'Emploi. VEQ coordinated this important and useful initiative that continued to build on the success of the previous two editions thanks to the partnership of the CeDeC, the Central Québec School Board, the Eastern Québec Learning Centre, the École de langues de l'Université Laval, Emploi-Québec, the Québec City Board of Trade, the Québec Chronicle-Telegraph and the Valcartier Family Centre.

The success of the Multilingual Zone was once again indisputable with over 350 people getting their second language evaluated by EQLC teachers and hundreds stopping by to get more information about employment opportunities for English-speakers and bilingual people in the QC region. Indeed, even Mr. Sam Hamad, Quebec Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity, got his English evaluated at the Zone.



**From Left to right: Jean-Sébastien J. Gignac (Assistant Executive Director - VEQ), Martin Gougeon (Coordinator - Quebec City Board of Trade), Nicole Carrier (EQLC teacher), Sam Hamad (Quebec Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity), Bruce Willett (Principal of EQLC and Director of Adult and Vocational Education for CQSB) and Shelly Gould (EQLC teacher)**

**Bilingual in Québec City**  
Voice of English-speaking Québec

**Un atout déterminant**

Winter 2007-2008 • Available at [veq.qc.ca](http://veq.qc.ca) under Services - Youth initiatives

Hiver 2007-2008 • Disponible au [veq.qc.ca](http://veq.qc.ca) sous Services - Youth initiatives

This information tool is a VEQ youth initiative, aimed at providing useful information about regional educational and employment opportunities for English-speaking bilingual youth.

Cet outil d'information est une initiative jeunesse de VEQ, dont l'objectif consiste à donner des informations utiles à propos des opportunités éducationnelles et professionnelles dans la région aux jeunes anglophones/bilingues.

"Étudier dans la région de Québec offre des avantages financiers évidents. Étudiant près de la résidence familiale, je ne suis pas un fardeau financier pour mes parents tout en ne contractant pas une importante dette d'étude. Je n'aurai donc pas à m'en faire avec un remboursement de prêt étudiant lorsque j'entreprendrai ma carrière."

## Bilingual in Québec City ... Un atout déterminant – Info Tool

VEQ continued to develop a print and web-based Information Tool for students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors presenting employment and educational opportunities for bilingual people in our region. In the last edition, the emphasis was put on educational success stories of young Anglophones and on employment opportunities at the Canada Revenue Agency in our region. To get an electronic copy of "Bilingual in Québec City ... un atout déterminant" go to our website [www.veq.qc.ca](http://www.veq.qc.ca).

# Helen Walling Finishes 9-Year Term as VEQ Executive Director

After nearly ten years as Executive Director, Helen Walling has decided to step down. In June 2008, Walling will begin pursuing a career in the private sector as a personal life - executive coach. Over her term as E.D., VEQ has grown exponentially in terms of members, the organization has established a solid financial foundation, and the organization has successfully led several important struggles on behalf of the local English-speaking community.

Walling came to VEQ from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Quebec where she was a successful fundraising and volunteer coordinator. She arrived at VEQ at a time when the organization was still modest in size and scope. Today the organization works on a number of files and benefits from the efforts of dozens of volunteers. "I am

most pleased about the fact that now most of our Board members complete their six year term and they feel sad about leaving," says Walling.

Walling is responsible for changing the organizational culture of VEQ, but she also spearheaded many tangible victories for the local English-speaking community. Of note, VEQ helped save English language health organizations in a fight against Bill 25 and the organization played a lead role in saving DDO's high school under Walling's leadership.

When asked, Walling mentions two particular achievements as particularly important: "I am personally pleased with the establishment of the Newcomers' Service and with starting up the Leadership Table," she says.



**VEQ Executive Director  
Helen Walling**

According to Walling the many victories VEQ has enjoyed over her tenure are a result of the efforts of the many hard working volunteers and staff. "I had the opportunity to work with wonderful Presidents, Board members, incredible staff, and with amazing volunteers. Without these people VEQ would be nothing."

# VEQ Executive Assistant Jennifer Alexander Moving to Kingston, Ontario

VEQ Executive Assistant Jennifer Alexander is sad to leave Quebec City. "I will miss my coworkers and friends," she says. "I have built a really great network of people here and I'm sad to leave them behind."

Alexander is moving to Kingston, Ontario, because her husband Sylvain has been transferred to the army base situated there.

Alexander moved to Quebec City in 2000 from Ontario. Since joining VEQ in 2001, she has learned to speak French, has started a family, and has developed an appreciation for Quebec culture. In many respects, Alexander has been the

glue that has held VEQ together over the past seven years.

When asked about her future Alexander is optimistic: "I am looking forward to exploring a new city, meeting new people and after a maternity leave getting back to work." Alexander is five months pregnant with her second child.

She will be sadly missed. Known to many as the friendly voice that answered the phones, met with newcomers and handled most front-line requests, Alexander was to many the face of VEQ.

Alexander's departure, "Quebec City's loss will be Kingston's gain." Touché!

Best of luck Jennifer. Keep in touch!



**Jennifer Alexander and her son Jameson enjoying the Community Festival**

President John Klassen says of



**is pleased to invite you to our  
Annual General Meeting  
& Meet and Greet**

**Date: Thursday, June 12**

**Time: 5 to 7 p.m.**

**Place: Au Coin Soleil Room, Jeffery Hale Hospital**

**Address: 1250 chemin Sainte-Foy, 2nd floor**

**Free parking**

**Please RSVP by Friday, June 6 by contacting Jennifer  
at 683-2366 or [info@veq.qc.ca](mailto:info@veq.qc.ca).**

**Come out and hear about some of our highlights for  
the past year, see familiar faces, meet new people, and  
enjoy refreshments and finger food.**

A brown, textured doormat with a black border. The word "WELCOME" is written in large, black, capital letters across the center of the mat.

**WELCOME**