

COMHAIRLE NA Gàidhlig BULLETIN – OCTOBER, 2010

This bulletin gives you an update of Comhairle na Gàidhlig – The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia activities since our May 2010 Newsletter. We welcome your feedback and your participation.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

AGM and Mini-Forum

The highlight of the Comhairle na Gàidhlig's year is the **Annual General Meeting**. This year we were hosted in Stellarton in May. As ever, it provided a chance for membership to come together, and to touch base with the board face-to-face. We had a good turnout, which is always a source of encouragement and motivation for the Board Members and staff. Standard reports were issued from the president Jessica MacLennan, Treasurer Bev Brett and Coordinator Caroline Cameron, reviewing the year and looking forward to the next.

Following the 'business', we embarked on our first-ever **"Mini-forum"** which was developed to gather the province-wide Gaelic community together to discuss and celebrate Gaelic Nova Scotia. We hosted a very productive discussion which considered where the Comhairle na Gàidhlig should focus its energies, and what kind of activities we should be undertaking into the future. There is a need for such on-going discussions because, although the organization is over twenty years old, we are only new to having paid staff. With such a resource, we have great potential to support the work of the community and the OGA *if* we choose our activities strategically.

A traditional Marag (oatmeal pudding) Dinner followed, and the group received addresses from Lewis MacKinnon of the OGA, local MLA Clarrie MacKinnon, Keynote Speaker author Frank Macdonald, and entertainment into the night. We received great feedback with which we can develop an improved program for next year. As our annual meetings alternate between the mainland and Cape Breton, we hope to see you on the Island next year!

On-going

The Executive of the Board of Directors have held monthly meetings through the summer, and the General board came back together in the fall. The **September meeting** was hosted in St. Peter's, Richmond County, and we invited Lewis MacKinnon of the OGA to join us and deliver a **workshop** on Gaelic vocabulary specific to meetings and administration. This arose from a general desire to gradually broaden the use of Gaelic throughout the community, and by extension, the workings of the Comhairle.

We received funding from Service Nova Scotia to hire a **student** for eight weeks, and had the pleasure of employing Breanna MacLeod, a St. FX University student from Chester with roots in the Mira. Breanna primarily helped with organizing the Mini-Forum, and assisting at Gaelic community events through the province from Breton Cove to Halifax.

Our main areas of work continue to be in finding ways to **increase the number of Gaelic speakers and increase awareness about Gaelic** throughout Nova Scotia. In support of these objectives, we have been spending a lot of time on cobbling together a budget for the current fiscal year based on a series of projects, while we continue to work on more secure and long-term funding.

The Coordinator has been doing **routine** maintenance of the website, updating its events calendar, membership list, and attending to requests and communications through our E-mail account. The **next newsletter** will be coming in November 2010, and as ever, we welcome any contributions.



Comhairle na Gàidhlig - The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, is a non-profit organization promoting and developing Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia. Our Board of Directors meets quarterly, alternating between Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia, and our Executive meets monthly. Anyone interested in being involved, or addressing a topic with our Committees or our Board is asked to please contact:

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CORRESPONDENCES & OUTREACH

In May, Comhairle na Gàidhlig Coordinator, Caroline Cameron, completed a series of **presentations to Municipal Councils** which were very well received. In describing what work we do and why, and our plans to establish an annual gathering, we continued to strengthen working relationships across the province. Subsequent requests for support for our Mini-Forum brought forward written and financial support from almost every municipal unit which we approached. One community group representative also stated that our presentation had “paved the way” for their group to receive municipal funds for their own work this year. Based on these types of outcomes, we plan to repeat these presentations on a regular basis.

The Comhairle’s Coordinator also has taken the opportunity to meet with provincial representatives of bodies representing other **Nova Scotian Cultures**. The Offices of African Nova Scotian Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs and Acadian Affairs each entertained hour-long meetings which allowed all

parties to share insights into the unique challenges of each cultural group, as well as the very strong parallels which we sometimes overlook.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig has also met with its counterpart in the Acadian Community, FANE (Federation Acadien Nouvelle Ecosse). This group has decades of experience from which the Gaelic community can benefit and they are quick to work collaboratively. There are a number of community-level groups throughout Black and Mi’kmaq Communities with which the Comhairle hopes to meet in the coming year.

There are two upcoming gatherings which will allow the Comhairle na Gàidhlig to make connections throughout the province’s **volunteer sector**, building support and raising awareness as we go. The Coastal Communities Network will be hosting its Annual General Meeting in October, and several delegates from the Gaelic Community have been nominated to attend the ‘Rural Policy Forum’ in Tatamagouche in November.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In November 2009, we hosted a workshop on Gàidhlig aig Baile methodology for prospective and current community tutors and schoolteachers. Coming out of this workshop in Ainslie Glen was a call for **opportunities to strengthen speaking skills** for learners with capacity to lead language sessions in communities. We are working to define such a workshop or workshop series, and will be seeking out interest from this group of learners who need to develop stronger speaking skills.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig will also be conducting an **inventory** of language development resources through an ‘Asset Mapping’ project. This will create a comprehensive listing of physical and human resources available to community classes and tutors.

We will need to discuss with local groups and tutors the resources they use. These discussions, and the process of mapping out these assets regionally, will also focus some attention on how to develop more local linkages in order to **build Gaelic regionally**. So the project has a ‘development’ dimension in addition to creating a good inventory.

We will soon begin working with school teachers to plan a **competition for students** with hopes to have the work presented for Gaelic Awareness Month in May 2011.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig is currently working with the **NSLTA** (Nova Scotia Second Language Teachers’ Association) to host an October workshop aimed at the needs of Gaelic community and school teachers.

COMMUNICATION & PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

This busy committee has directed a number of good projects over the last months, including hosting a **Media Workshop**. Please watch for a summary of this work in our November 2010 newsletter. We

also initiated a **brochure** to introduce locals and travelers to the **Gaelic road signs** found around the province. The brochure, produced by the Office of Gaelic Affairs, provides contact information and

websites for those interested in learning more about Gaelic. Readers are also directed to files on the OGA website where the pronunciation of each place name can be heard.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig produced a **bookmark** over the summer to use as a simple promotional tool to introduce our organization.

The committee is starting to think now about special activities for **Gaelic Awareness Month**. We are considering establishing a theme each year that can be used province-wide, and would blend with the focus of the Annual Forum in May.

Each of these initiatives has a role in awareness-raising, and the Comhairle will be developing a broader **Communications Strategy** for the Gaelic community which can support the work and communications of all groups and individuals.

This strategy will be presented in a **Promotions Package** including a 'quick fact' sheets, the brochure, lists of community groups, educational resources and media tips and contacts.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig now has 250 'friends' on **Facebook**, showing the good will that exists in the internet community for supporting Gaelic.

The Comhairle na Gàidhlig website, **www.gaelic.ca**, hosts information on Gaelic language and culture, details on our activities, and our past newsletters and bulletins. We encourage you to send your Gaelic language and culture activities to us for posting on our **web calendar** of events.

The Comhairle also hosts Caint mo Mhàthar - **www.cainntmomhathar.com**, in partnership with Highland Village Museum. This site provides recordings and video of local Gaelic speakers, which are valuable resources for Gaelic learners.

Membership will be an important concern in the coming years as we strive to strengthen our connections throughout the Gaelic Community, and demonstrate to funders that we represent a large constituency whose needs must be met. We encourage your support through membership as we embark on a membership campaign this year.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Comhairle is beginning a **discussion with the OGA** to further clarify how to focus each body's activities, so as to continue to minimize overlap and duplication. Because of the breadth of work that is to be undertaken to support Gaelic development, there is a lot of territory to cover. But we hope that, through discussion and consultation, we can establish a good foundation for each organization's planning, which will provide a stronger framework for community work.

Planning for the next **Annual Gathering** of the Comhairle na Gàidhlig in May 2011 will begin

shortly. We are really encouraged by the response to the idea of a provincial gathering, and we hope to provide a varied program. Many directions are available to us, and in the long run, we would like to see education, entertainment, a tradeshow, workshops and a general celebration of Gaelic Nova Scotia to come together in our **'Forum'**. We welcome participation in planning this event. We will also keep firmly in mind the membership's direction, given at our 2010 Mini-Forum discussion, that we should not 'take on too much'. So we look forward to step-wise growth.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Comhairle Executive forms the Governance committee, which ensures that the Council operates in an effective and forthright manner. Over the last few months, we have been working on regularizing our committee meetings, which can be a challenge for a provincial organization. We are currently establishing a Finance Committee and a Fund-raising Committee, as well as a Policy Development

Committee to formalize and strengthen Comhairle na Gàidhlig's advocacy role. Our first formal foray into this arena was the recent participation in developing a 'position paper' for the Nova Scotia Culture Division Consultations, its distribution throughout the Gaelic community, and ensuring representation at these meetings.

✂ PLEASE CONSIDER SHOWING YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR WORK BY BECOMING A MEMBER! ✂