

C COLUMNIST

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EDUCATION ANALYSIS

School boards prevented from buying local

The law on accredited bookstores is costly and outdated for the independents

By Scott Stevenson

Accreditation is often overrated. Good English is not. Public education in Quebec—and particularly our provincial government—needs more of the latter and less of the former.

School boards get a subsidy from our tax dollars for their book purchases—in accredited bookstores. Such sales can account for a lot of income for a bookstore when you consider all the textbooks, novels, and the like required for the classroom.

French-language school boards in the Sherbrooke area can draw on the resources of medium-sized French bookstores like Librairie GGC for their book needs in French. Some teachers from those boards also shop at Black Cat Books in Lennoxville for the owner Jan-

ice LaDuke's expertise in English-language books.

But Black Cat is small and owner operated; accreditation is onerous. So teachers and school boards do only a small amount of shopping there. They don't get a government refund for part of the cost of their purchases.

Ms. LaDuke looked into accreditation, hoping that the Eastern Townships School Board could direct more of its purchases to the local business rather than Chapters and the like. The extra business would certainly help as Ms. LaDuke ponders an uncertain future for her store.

But Quebec's Regulation respecting the accreditation of bookstores: An Act respecting the development of Québec firms in the book industry is costly for a small store—and outdated.

"English-language accredited bookstores must have the following bibliographic material: (1) Books in print [sic] (United States); (2) British Books in Print (United Kingdom); (3) Canadian Books in Print...." the law states.

Ms. LaDuke does not carry such voluminous publications because all the information they contain can be accessed quickly by Internet today.

It strikes me as just a little discouraging that we've come to the point of allowing the government to decide quality in a bookstore rather than letting customers, including teachers and school boards, do so.

The government—and its lawyers and copywriters—aren't even capable of writing the law clearly: all instances of the above "Books in Print" should have the upper case "B" and "P" and should be

italicized if they are to clearly indicate the title of a publication. When Janice LaDuke showed me a copy of the law, I thought it was referring to books in print, as it states, which would be physical books in the bookstore—not the name of a publication.

As it is now, the government's so-called "development of Québec firms in the book industry" simply favours the big stores that are most likely to thank the latest political party in power with as many donations as they can legally get away with—at the expense of small independent operations like Black Cat and the teachers and school boards that would like to keep their public funds supporting the local community.

Pot Pourri Choir raising voices and funds to help local causes



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

The talented individuals who make up the Pot Pourri Choir have found a way to share their love for music

while raising funds to help local community groups. Last December the Choir performed for many appreciative audiences and the generosity of those who attended concerts helped the choir to make substantial donations to the Helping Hands Food Bank in Cowansville as well as an amazing \$1500 donation to the Brome Lake Food Bank.

With the arrival of spring, the choir is directing its efforts toward supporting the needs of youth with two upcoming concerts being held on the same weekend! Saturday, May 14 at 3:00pm at the St. Patrick's Cultural Centre located at 854, Route Missisquoi in Bolton East there will be a concert to benefit the Mis-

sisquoi North Youth Programs in Mansonville. On Sunday, May 15 at 3:00pm at the Community Centre located at 270 Rue Victoria in Knowlton, a second concert will benefit the Lac-Brome Youth Programs. In Knowlton, the proceeds will be directed to the "Salamander Summer Camp and in Mansonville the Youth Centre proceeds will help to create a Music Room in the basement of the Centre.

Under the direction of the amazing choir director, Susan Reininger, the concert is told in the style of a radio broadcast written by Vesta Jorgensen and opens with five beautiful nocturnes. The concert will also include memorable

toe-tapping melodies of the 1930's Jazz age as well as numbers including: Cole Porter's "Let's Fall in Love," "I've Got You under My Skin," "I've Got Rhythm," and Ellington's, "It Don't Mean a Thing."

Tickets are going fast. For information call 450-242-2333 or 450-243-6854. Admission is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children. Tickets are available at the Missisquoi North Youth Centre in Mansonville, the Cultural Centre in East Bolton and the Community Centre in Knowlton.

Come out and support the Pot Pourri Choir as its members raise their voices while raising funds in support of various community initiatives.



COURTESY



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