

Media Release

Newfoundland and Labrador Hires First Provincial Folklorist

Provincial, NL, April 11, 2008 -Newfoundland and Labrador has recently created a position for its first provincial folklorist. With the support of the provincial government, the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) has hired Dale Jarvis as the first (ICH) Development Officer for the province.

Jarvis has worked for 13 years with HFNL, having completed his Folklore MA at Memorial. He brings to the position involvement in local storytelling festivals and events, as well as a wide knowledge of the local heritage community. Jarvis is the author of two popular books on Newfoundland and Labrador folklore and ghost stories, and a third book of world ghost stories for young adult readers.

“This is a dream job for me,” says Jarvis. “It brings together a lot of my interests, and I am very excited about the potential for this program. The living culture and tradition of the province is one of our greatest resources. I am delighted that I will be involved in helping document, conserve and encourage those aspects of our heritage.”

The position of ICH Development Officer is the fruition of six years of work in the province, drawing on the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), including its 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In 2002, Dr. Gerald Pocius of Memorial University’s Folklore Department was involved in consultations on an early draft of the UNESCO Convention. Over the past six years, Pocius has been working with various provincial government agencies on policies and programs. Anita Best, another MUN Folklore Department graduate, worked for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in getting ICH as one of the main heritage priorities in the province’s “Cultural Blueprint: Creative Newfoundland and Labrador,” released in 2006.

During that same year, the Association of Heritage Industries organized its annual meeting in St. John’s around the theme of ICH, with speakers from the Smithsonian, the American Folklife Center, and the ICH section of UNESCO. Memorial University’s Folklore Department continues to conduct a pilot inventory project in cooperation with the provincial government, and has committed to assist in developing training and documentation programs for the province in the future.

“The ICH program for Newfoundland and Labrador has great potential,” says Jarvis. “ICH is all around us, in everything we do: in our stories, our languages, the songs we sing, the crafts we produce, and in the knowledge people have about the land and sea that our history and culture is based upon.”

Jarvis has started an internet blog site to keep people informed on the work of the provincial folklorist position, which can be found at <http://doodledaddle.blogspot.com>.

“What is a doodle-daddle, and what does it have to do with folklore and intangible cultural heritage?” Jarvis asks with a laugh. “Check out the blog, find out, and share your stories!”

The new provincial folklorist can be reached by telephone at 1-888-739-1892, or by email at ich@heritagefoundation.ca

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Read the ICH Blog at: <http://doodledaddle.blogspot.com>