



Letter from the President

Potton, December 20, 2023

Dear Members and Friends,



In this month of December, I am once again coming to deliver you the news from your Board of Directors.

2023 was a productive and rewarding year in many ways for your administrators.

Winter and spring have been used to complete our ongoing projects.

The summer saw the completion of these projects. In May, we unveiled our BaladoDiscovery, which was very well received by municipal elected officials as well as the population and tourists. It has been consulted several thousand times since it was first put into circulation. We owe this achievement to our Vice-President Pierre L'Heureux. The President's village tours took place only a few times, due to recalcitrant weather. Frank Ruiz and Gisèle Bonin, for their part, were able to offer a summer hiking program that was appreciated by the participants.

July has also contributed to the launch of our private Facebook group by Taissa Hrycay, our director responsible for communications. This group was designed to reach a larger network of potential members but also as a place for members to exchange on the history and heritage of Potton. The group now has nearly 200 members and continues to grow. With this tool, I believe we have been able to reach more of the local population.

In the fall, our exhibition on the Potton Mountains was set up at Mont Owl's Head during the Festival of Colours, after a long-term work by our secretary Thierry Roger, assisted by myself. Visitors were quite pleased by it and showed their appreciation. This exhibition, designed to be mobile, was installed at the municipal library from mid-November to the Christmas holidays.

On November 14th, we were surprised to receive a substantial grant from the Townshippers' Foundation on Research and Culture. This was possible thanks to the intervention of Taissa Hrycay, who was able to track down possible sources of funding and present a project to this effect. This project consists of creating a second BaladoDiscovery on tourism in Potton in the 19th century. It goes without saying that our exhibition already presented on the same subject, will be greatly used for this project.

We have also signed a one-year lease, effective December 1st, for a new storage space for our archives and exhibitions, etc. The current premises, lent by the municipality, have become too small for our needs.

Over the course of the year, I played a major public relations role with the community, whether it was at the launch of the BaladoDiscovery, by running an information booth at the Potton Spirit Festival, by meeting with the leaders of the Wellness Centre at the former Potton Springs site, by presenting a screening of the BaladoDiscovery

at the Seniors' Centre La Plume au vent, by exchanging with officials from other Eastern Townships Historical Societies, etc. All these meetings proved to be interesting and enriching from several points of view.

More good news awaited us in the fall. As you know, the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications, Mathieu Lacombe, announced his intention to request the classification of the Frontier Covered Bridge. You have been able to read our letter of support for this classification. I attended the meeting of the Potton Municipal Council on December 4th where I was able to defend the position of the Heritage Association regarding the classification of the Frontier Bridge. I cannot express enough my disappointment and that of your administrators at the decision of the City Council to not support this request for classification.

2023 has been a busy year for us and one that I am very proud of as President. I am particularly pleased with the work done by your directors because all this work has been done by only four people. So, I want to pay tribute to them. I would also like to thank Serge Normand for his ongoing cooperation on the digital side. Over the past year, our websites have been revamped, simplified procedures are in place for our mailing lists, and our Digital Library is well managed. This volunteer work saves us a lot of money.

2024 is also shaping up to be a busy year. First of all, we are going to intensively monitor the file for the classification of the covered bridge. We will continue our work for the release of the BaladoDiscovery on tourism, all of which is conditional on reaching the total amount needed for its completion. We will set up a communications network with the Historical Societies of the Eastern Townships in order to provide each other with help and support.

For all that, it is imperative that we find new members for our Board of Directors. We have several ideas to develop, we are still motivated to give everything we can to the Association, but we will simply not be able to do it with only four people, two of whom are still working full-time. Your help in this regard is more than ever necessary.

With that, I wish you a Merry Christmas among your loved ones and my best wishes for a healthy 2024!



Lorraine Rouillard, President | Potton Heritage Association