

A vous, nos très chers Membres de l'Alliance Française:

We, the Officers and Board Members of Alliance Française Lake Champlain Region "Alliance Française," wish to give you a Summary of some of the things we have been excited to accomplish, and to have brought to you, our cherished Membership, over the past year.

We also wish to give you a taste of some future things we are working diligently to bring to you as we conclude 2016 and move into 2017.

We hope you will be pleased, and we welcome your feedback at victoria@afclr.org or info@afclr.org . We also continue to hope for Volunteers to step forward from our membership to help lighten the work load, as the time commitment by the Officers and the Board is significant:

1. HUGE JUMP IN MEMBERSHIP

The Board is overjoyed to report that our Membership is at an all-time high of 194 paid-up and current members (as compared to less than 50 in December 2014)!

Going forward the Board hopes to continue to foster more inclusiveness and diversity in our membership. We encourage our members to help us in this goal as we welcome all interested in the French language, diverse Francophone cultures, and heritage to Alliance Française.

2. DEDICATED "ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE" LOCATION AT 43 KING STREET

For the first time, Alliance Française has a dedicated location which is at 43 King Street, Burlington. A longer term lease was signed this year for the space; and it has been freshly painted inside and outside.

The welcoming design of the space was guided by volunteer and professional designer Suzanne Stimik, and implemented with tremendous energy by Adrienne and Devin Coléon-Gaskell, and a team of volunteers.

You also will note the Alliance signage outside the building, which again is a first for our organization.

This space has allowed Alliance Française to finally have a dedicated central location for Board meetings, Member meetings, Classes in Burlington, Children's activities, and other Member events such as Galette des Rois. And, the space includes a children's room with toys and French children's books.

3. PHENOMENAL GROWTH AND RECOGNITION BY "SEVEN DAYS" OF ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE CLASSES

Alliance Française has 86 people registered for the Fall 2016 classes! These classes now are offered in Burlington, Colchester, and Montpelier. In the past, our registration typically ranged between 35 and 55 people, so this increase is a huge achievement.

Further, our classes and outstanding teachers were the recent subject of a positive article in [“Seven Days.”](#)

The Board is grateful for the outstanding work of volunteer Micheline Tremblay, her associate, Alysse Anton, and all of the talented and enthusiastic teachers.

4. NEW AFTER SCHOOL FRENCH IMMERSION & OPEN HOURS FOR CHILDREN

New this Fall, Alliance Française will be offering a French Immersion Program for Children. It will be run by a new volunteer who is a French native and certified teacher, Baptiste Devallé, at our King Street location.

We plan to start this Immersion Program by making it available to children ages 6 to 10 years old; but if it is successful, we hope to expand it. The Immersion Program will focus on French immersion and activity-based learning. There will be two sessions: one designed for Beginners in French; the other designed for Bilingual children. The Board also is continuing to expand by gifts and loans, the books in French available to our young readers at the King Street location.

The Board is quite excited about the new program, as we recognize the need to start off our French loving recruits and future members early.

The Board is grateful for the efforts of Adrienne Coléon-Gaskell, Marielle Aunave (associate professor at UVM) and Baptiste Delvallé who crafted this new children's immersion program.

This year, we also introduced from January to June a story time for kids: the program was generously led by volunteer Caroline Juneau (French teacher at the Renaissance school) and designed for French bilingual children. The Board hopes to see this program back.

5. SOIRÉES CINÉ: SPONSORSHIP OF FRENCH/QUEBECOIS/BELGIAN FILMS

This year, Alliance Française is a proud sponsor of the Vermont International Film Festival (VTIFF). The Board chose to become a sponsor given the importance, and the wide number of French language films, being brought to Burlington as part of the event.

The five French language films which will be shown have received César and Cannes awards, and cover topics which are extremely timely to events occurring in the world. Alliance Française will have the films on its website, as will VTIFF; but watch for “Fatima,” “Ma Révolution,” “Microbe & Gasoline,” “Made in France,” and “Evolution.”

Further, Alliance Française, through one of its Board members, will continue to show French/Quebecois films at St. Michael's College this Fall/Winter including “La Grande Séduction” and “Gabrielle.” The numbers of members attending these film events has

dramatically increased to now more than thirty-five people on average. Alliance Française will notify you of these and other upcoming films on its website and in the newsletter.

The Board is grateful for the efforts of volunteer Laurence Clerfeuille (French Professor at Saint Michael's) in partnering with VTIFF on the sponsorship and for organizing all the films at Saint Michael's College.

6. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS FOR MEMBERS

A. GALA DINNER AT BISTRO DE MARGOT

In March 2016, Alliance Française held a Gala dinner at Bistro de Margot which was attended by 64 Members as well as the French Consul General Valéry Freland and the Honorary Consul Ernest Pomerleau. The event sold out quickly and was an evening of fantastic food and great company which netted a profit for Alliance Française.

The Board is grateful for the efforts of volunteers Micheline Tremblay, Tom Avenia and Donna Gallas, as well as our partnership with Hervé Mahé, owner of Bistro de Margot, for bringing this special evening to our members. The Board is hoping to repeat this event in 2017.

B. DEJEUNER EN BLANC

In August 2016, Alliance Française held the first [Déjeuner en Blanc for members only](#) at the home of our President, Victoria Jones. The event was a huge success for members and their children, all of whom dressed in white, and who enjoyed some French delicacies “à la bonne franquette,” including traditional French Baba-au-Rhum and Canard à l'Orange, while engaging in warm conversation.

The Board is grateful to President Victoria Jones for hosting this new event and for volunteer Nicolas Gandriau who dressed up as a Chef and cooked the Canard à l'Orange; the Board hopes to repeat it in 2017.

C. YOUNG ADULT EVENTS: QUÉBEC HIP HOP ARTIST WEBSTER

This year, Alliance Française co-sponsored with the Quebec Government Office in Boston and Saint Michael's College, a “Sénéquéb” hip hop artist (with one parent from Sénégal), Webster. This was part of our new focus on bringing young adults into the organization. The event was attended by over sixty people; and each of Webster's song was preceded by an explanation of their context such as racial profiling or discrimination. The Board hopes to sponsor and promote other cultural events and performers in 2016/2017 who bring more diversity, and who will attract younger adults, so that Alliance Française becomes even more vibrant as we move forward.

D. HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Alliance Française hosted a number of cultural events in 2016 to mark special French/Quebécois occasions including Chandeleur Crêpes (special thanks to Marielle Aunave and Sandrine Dincki) and Galette des Rois (special thanks to Victoria Jones and Sandrine Dincki). The Board hopes to repeat these events in 2017.

E. MONTHLY EVENTS: DEUXIEME SAMEDI AND FRENCH THURSDAY

Alliance Française also continued to host the well-attended le Deuxième Samedi lunches (conversation with a French teacher, Micheline Tremblay) and the French Thursdays for cocktails in a hotel setting (Hotel Vermont, Marriott Hotel, Hilton Hotel). Micheline Tremblay and all members of the Board have been rotating attendance at these events to interact with the membership. The Board hopes to continue these events throughout 2016/2017.

F. GAD ELMALEH IN BURLINGTON

Gad Elmaleh has been one of the most popular comedians in France; and thus, Alliance was proud to partner with Higher Ground to promote Gad Elmaleh's show, with tickets given away as part of our King Street Opening Raffle.

G. TAROT CARD GAME

This year we also launched a tarot (a traditional French card game) event held at volunteers Anne-Marie and Steve Hulsey's, which was a boisterously well-liked event. The Board hopes to repeat this type of event.

H. FRANCOPHONIE MONTH: FRANCOPHONIE DINNER and FLAGRAISING

This year we hosted the 5th Annual Francophone Dinner, which was an evening of Francophone food and music, in partnership with North End Studios.

A special thank you to Alysse Anton, who lead a team of more than 20 volunteers including cooks, musicians and singers.

We also hosted French consul Valéry Freland for the annual flag raising, which was generously sponsored by our honorary consul, Ernest Pomerleau. Many thanks to volunteers Lise Veronneau and Linda Pervier for organizing this event.

I. VIGILS FOR FRANCE: PARIS AND NICE

Further, the Board held several vigils to help express its and its members deep sadness and sympathies for people in Paris and Nice: we are proud to be a point of rally for all people with every level of connection to France to gather and feel like a family at times where one wished to be closer to this country, which is called "home" for many of our members.

J. GOÛT DE FRANCE

In close collaboration with the French consulate in Boston, Bistro de Margot, and the New England Culinary Institute, we are proud to have started in March 2016 to bring to you Goût de France where French restaurants feature a special menu to celebrate French gastronomy, with special discounts for our Alliance Française members.

K. COMING IN MARCH: ONE DAY UVM CONFERENCE FRENCH CONNECTION

We are thrilled to announce that we are partnering with UVM for “French Connection / Franconnections,” a conference highlighting the historical, cultural and economic contribution of French immigrants (from Quebec) to Vermont and New England.

7. BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS AND OUT-REACH

Alliance Française continued its strong efforts to be an active part of the business community in 2016.

Alliance Française, working with the Church Street Marketplace, and under the leadership of Matthew Ennis, organized to welcome French speaking visitors and to give them directions to local attractions and businesses.

Further and importantly, in March 2016, Alliance Française organized in partnership with the Vermont-Quebec Enterprise Initiative a well-attended “Quebec-Friendly Business Seminar” in Burlington, sponsored by our Honorary Consul, Ernest Pomerleau, and in partnership with the Vermont-Quebec Enterprise Initiative.

This Seminar also marked the launch of our new Business Memberships. Business members will enjoy all benefits of the regular Alliance membership, for up to 10 employees, in addition to business specific benefits and events. The Board is grateful to Lise Veronneau and Richard Gliech for their efforts with the surrounding business communities.

Additionally, Alliance Française now has a partnership with the Burlington based French language service company, Richard Gliech Translator, LLC. This allows Alliance Française to offer new individual members a \$25 discount for translation and new business members up to a \$100 discount for a translation.

It also gives Alliance Française the ability to offer translation services on its website and to generate more exposure through Richard Gliech Translator, LLC's website. And, Mr. Gliech's company made an annual contribution to Alliance Française in 2016. The Board is grateful to Richard Gliech who became a Board member in 2016.

8. FRENCH BOOK CLUB

For Fall/Winter/Spring 2016/2017, Alliance Française hopes to introduce its book club members to authors such as Quebec Innu writer Naomi Fontaine, Vietnamese Quebec writer Kim Thúy,

and the French best-selling writer Amélie Nothomb. These intimate book discussions will continue to be hosted by Laurence Clerfeuille at St. Michael's College; and the Board hopes more members will flex their French language skills by joining us this year.

9. COMMUNICATION: OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, WEBSITE and FACEBOOK PAGE

Throughout the year, we were proud to continue to bring to you our newly formatted Monthly newsletter (and weekly reminders), and hope you enjoyed as much as we did our message to the members, French quotes and facts, as well as an updated overview of the Francophone events in the regions. We have grown from 300 followers last year to more than 950 followers!

Our Facebook page also reached the milestone of 500 likes! And our website continues to provide an easy access to what is happening at your Alliance Française.

10. MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT SYSTEM

As some members may recall, in 2015 the Board approved a major upgrade to our Membership Enrollment System. Janice Dawley provided the technical expertise to modify the database structure after which Charles Rousseau examined and amended each individual member record. Alliance Française now can assign membership expiration dates based on the month of enrollment/renewal. This means you, our members, get a full 12 months of benefits, as well as advance notice before your membership expires. And, the Board recently decided that for members renewing within 15 days of their expiration date, that Alliance Française would make the renewal good for an extra month, or a full 13 months, as a thank you gift.

The Board is grateful to volunteers Charles Rousseau and Janice Dawley for the new system, and to Charles for his ongoing contribution and commitment to maintaining the system and membership records.

11. ACCESS TO CULTURETHEQUE & DIGITAL LIBRARY

The Board is proud of the overwhelming use by our Membership of Culturethèque, a digital library giving access to the 'live' culture of France, with access in real time to major press publications such as "Paris Match," "Cuisines et Vins de France," as well as audiobooks for children and adults, and comics such as "Spirou."

We continue to be the first and only small chapter of Alliances in the U.S. to have access rights to Culturethèque to offer it as part of one's membership.

12. VOLUNTEERS

Alliance Française could not survive without the help of volunteers from the membership. The Board is a volunteer board; and like all of our members, we have many other commitments and demands on our time. Hence, we are not able to do everything that comes before the Board; and we try to select those events that we believe will best be of interest to the membership and also will promote a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant organization. The Board also attempts to select

events where it believes there can be a good and mutually beneficial partnership or sponsorship with another organization or entity (such as VTIFF or the Quebec Government Office in Boston).

The Board is grateful and, in particular, would like to recognize the following volunteers for their outstanding contributions in 2016 (in addition to the volunteers listed throughout this letter): Charles Rousseau (membership system coordinator, assistance with class records, installation of an AC unit, gift to Alliance Française of a cart and speakers used by the teachers); Sandrine Dincki (financial books and records, bill paying, Treasurer); Janice Dawley (website maintenance); Caroline Juneau (Storytime); Tom Avenia (Gala Dinner); Matthew Ennis (Church Street Tent); Alma Greene (Photography), Charles-Louis Morand-Métivier et Jeanne Liebermann (board members in 2016); Janice Fetsch (organizational matters, assisting on legal and negotiation matters, membership communication); Linda Pervier (advertisement); Jean-Sebastien Chaulot (playgroup); Jacob Shapiro (Newsletter).

The President is grateful for the service and support of all the board members throughout this year.

And, the Board is indebted to its extraordinary benefactor, Monsieur Ernest Pomerleau.

Finally, the Board is thankful for the generosity of businesses, such as Leunigs, New England Culinary Institute, Bistro de Margot, City Market, Heathy Living, August 1st, Shelburne Museum, Shelburne Farms, Von Trapp Family Lodge, Aristelle and Dedalus.

13. FINANCIAL HEALTH

The Board is extremely pleased to report that Alliance Française is in a healthy financial state with a large cash reserve (over 2X more than where it was two years ago). We have more than sufficient reserves at this point to cover six months of rent and Internet service at our locations, and to proceed with the events to which the Board has determined to commit its time in 2016/2017 for the benefit of the membership.

The Board is grateful to our departing Treasurer Sandi Dincki, who has led efforts to increase our focus on budgeting/reserves/costs for the organization. This represent a tremendous amount of work which often goes unnoticed.

In conclusion, we hope that all of you will continue to be a part of Alliance Française, and that you will strongly consider joining in volunteering to assist with one or more events. Opportunities to volunteer bring us more of a sense of community and allow you even more of a chance to participate in French culture and education.

We, the Officers and Board of Alliance Française, promise to keep pushing ourselves to explore ways to make the organization more timely, relevant, vibrant, and diverse.

Victoria Brassart-Jones, President
Laurence Clerfeuille, Secretary

Sandi Dincki, Departing Treasurer

Micheline Tremblay, Board Member

Adrienne Coleon Gaskell, Board Member

Lise Veronneau, Board Member

Janice Fetsch, Board Member

Richard Gliech, Board Member

Linda Pervier, Board Member

Marielle Macias-Aunave, Board Member