

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS ORGANIZATION TO LAUNCH NEW EDUCATION INITIATIVES

(November 12, 2007) More than 100 English-language Quebec artists gathered this evening at the Lion D'Or in Montreal to elect a new president and board members and to set priorities for the future.

The English-Language Arts Network (ELAN), which was founded in November 2005, is designed to promote the work and interests of Quebec's English-language artists and to build bridges with their francophone colleagues. The organization now has more than 1300 members.

Guy Rodgers, a Montreal writer and multimedia artist, was elected the new president. Rodgers was one of the founders of the organization and served for two years as its executive director. He said that one of the most important initiatives in the upcoming year will be the new Action Group on education. "The group's mandate is to open doors into the complex and highly compartmentalized education system. We want to get a lot more of ELAN's members involved in helping solve problems that we all share—and the English-language education system could be one of the most important partners for the artistic community."

One of ELAN's ongoing priorities is to help the many talented artists working in Quebec get the exposure they deserve. "The music and literary scenes are getting national recognition" says Rodgers, "and we are just beginning to realize what a powerful renaissance is underway in the English-language arts scene in Quebec."

Rodgers said that this renaissance was reflected in the quality of people who have been elected to the organization's board of directors, with representation from all artistic disciplines. **Jane Needles**, past president of the Quebec Drama Federation, was elected vice-president and **Chuck Childs**, executive director of the Centaur theatre, was elected treasurer.

The writing representatives are **Ian Ferrier**, past-president of the Quebec Writers' Federation and award-winning fiction writer, **Dimitri Nasrallah**. **Vickie Marcok** is the English-language publishers' representative.

The music community is represented by **Heidi Fleming** and **Kathy Kennedy**. **Mariko Tanabe** joins **Lin Snelling** as dance community representatives.

Visual arts are represented by **Juliana Espana Keller** and **Tod Van Dyk**. Film and television are represented by **Kirwan Cox** and **Brandi-Ann Milbrandt**.

Kate Wisdom, the cultural coordinator with the Townshippers Association, represents regional artists. Actress and playwright, **Anna Furstenberg** is the second theatre representative, along with Jane Needles.