

TWENTY QUESTIONS WITH

Chantal Charbonneau

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Speaker Reporter

This week's Twenty Questions features an interview with ARTEM's Activities Coordinator, Chantal Charbonneau.

1. What is your full name?

My full name is Chantal Lyse Charbonneau

2. Where were you born?

I was born in a blinding snowstorm in May at the Misericordia hospital in Haileybury.

3. What organization are you affiliated with?

I have been working at Le Centre culturel ARTEM for over a year now.

4. What are your duties with ARTEM?

As the activities coordinator, my job is to plan, coordinate, and promote many different events. I also act as a liaison between ARTEM and several different organizations.

5. Explain what ARTEM is?

ARTEM is a non-profit organization that strives to offer a wide range of cultural events, activities, and workshops for the francophone community.

6. How long has this organization been in existence?

ARTEM has been in existence, in some way, for 36 years.

7. How did it get started?

Le Centre culturel ARTEM was created in 1976, as a sub-committee of l'ACFO Temiskaming, which was at that time responsible for the cultural mandate of the Francophone community of the region. It was known then as ARTEMISKAMING. Throughout the years, it became apparent that there was a great need for a francophone cultural center in our region. In May of 1985, ARTEMISKAMING was officially incorporated as a non-profit organization under the name Le Centre culturel ARTEM.

8. What is ARTEM's mandate?

Le Centre culturel ARTEM's mandate is to offer cultural and social activities; to heighten public awareness of French artists and groups; to promote local talents; to ensure a new generation of emerging artists; to gather francophone citizens, and bring them a sense of belonging and pride in their community; to encourage the practice of arts and crafts in the Temiskaming region; and to enable the population to socialize, and enjoy life in French.

9. How is ARTEM funded?

Being a non-profit organization, ARTEM relies on various government funds. We receive funding from the Ontario Arts Council, FedNor, and Canadian Heritage. The paperwork is extensive but necessary for the survival of organizations such as ours.

10. What recent events has ARTEM been involved with?

Our most recent and notable event was held during the AFMO



(Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario) conference on September 5 2012. Le Centre culturel ARTEM organized a "mini food fair" for the delegates and the general public. Fifteen local vendors, as well as 10 wonderful local artists participated in the event. The evening, which was attended by over a thousand guests, was also the opportune moment for the launching of our interactive cultural tours (Tournées interactives communautaires TIC). This first, (of many) circuits, narrated by local artist Rose-Aimée Bélanger, tells the story of the francophone community in Temiskaming. This 1.5 km tour, following the boardwalk, as well as parts of downtown New Liskeard, explains 25 points of interest. That evening, we also launched our first Interactive Health Tour, a 2.4 km circuit that encourages people to discover this wonderful region in a healthy, physical way. We are blessed to have consultants from the Niska Leadership Centre guiding us during this big project. They work tirelessly day after day. We have also partnered with Le Centre de santé communautaire for this part of the project.

11. Why is it important to have an organization to promote francophone arts and culture?

I think it is important to emphasize a community's assets, whether they are French or English. Whereas English artists, music, and movies, are widely well known in popular culture due to media coverage, French artists, musicians, and actors remain fairly obscure, in some areas more than others. This region, known for its thriving bilingualism, is blessed to have so many incredible talents. Organizations such as ours, allow the

public to enjoy what the francophone community has to offer. The food fair, which I mentioned above, was attended by both English and French guests. It is important to expose people to different cultures and I believe francophones are an added value to the community. Their certain "joie de vivre" only serves to enhance our beautiful region.

12. How do you promote the arts and culture of the francophone in Temiskaming?

We promote our events in many different ways. We advertise in local newspapers, on partners' websites, at local businesses and on media platforms such as Facebook, as well as on our own website www.centrear-tem.org. We also partner with many different organizations; the Pied Piper Kidshow, the Festival des Folies Franco-Fun, ACFO Temiskaming, and the various schools of the region. We are now also members of the Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Haileybury Heritage Museum. The "Mécènes sans cennes", a group of 5 local artists, are also under ARTEM's wings. We support them in their many artisan's fairs and art exhibitions. The collaboration with our neighbouring Quebec artists is also a thriving friendship.

13. Anything exciting coming up?

The annual "Salon des arts" (artisan's fair) will take place on the 27th and 28th of October at St-Michel school on Hwy 11 north. Artists of all genres will display and sell their many works of art. The next event coming up is our annual Christmas supper/show/dance held for francophone organizations. This year, the event will take place on December 1 at Riverside Place. Guests will be

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entertained by folklorist André Thériault, and will be quickly transported back to Christmases of yesteryear. In the spring of 2013, ARTEM will host a special workshop for artists, which will be followed by an interactive catalogue on our website where artists will be able to advertise their works of art and workshops. We hope this will become an indispensable tool for schools, small enterprises, cultural associations, and for the general public. During the next few months, we will also be sponsoring a storyteller for French schools, as well as planning a special event for Women's Day. We hope to host another food fair next year, but with a different flair and theme.

14. What was the most interesting day on the job for you so far?

The most interesting day would have to be the night of the food fair. What an amazing feeling to stand there and see the curling club filled to capacity with people wanting to join in the festivities! Hearing the positive feedback from people coming into the office during the next few days was equally satisfying and encouraging. If you were to ask what was my most interesting week on the job so far, I would have to say the annual French Ontario Contact conference in Ottawa. As a single mom of four beautiful kids, it is my one and only week away from home. One whole week of meeting artists, and producers of

all regions. It's a rough week, with only a few hours of sleep, but very entertaining, informational, and definitely well worth the time and money!

15. What have you learned about the francophone community that has amazed you?

Born and raised as a francophone, nothing has really surprised me about the francophone community, but I am always amazed at the incredible talent our region is blessed with. The many local French schools have amazing programs, and local francophone and francophile businesses are proud of their bilingualism and are always ready to support us. I am also proud to say that our volunteers are numerous, and always willing to lend a helping hand.

16. What groups are members of ARTEM?

We don't have groups as such, but we do sell membership cards. As I mentioned above, we do however, partner with many different francophone and anglophone organizations.

17. What inspires Chantal Charbonneau?

Many different people and things inspire me. My parents and sisters have been my biggest champions throughout my life; my grandparents have taught me what everlasting love is all about; my kids have brought life and wonderment to my world; my friends keep me young at heart; music gives words to what I can't express, and nature keeps

reminding me that the world is an amazing place to live in.

18. Is ARTEM administered by a Board of Directors?

Yes, ARTEM is administered by a Board of Directors. We have a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and 4 to 6 councilors.

19. Can anyone be a Board member?

Yes, so long and as such as the person is capable of understanding, speaking, reading and writing in French. The person wishing to become a Board member must also be a citizen of the Temiskaming region.

20. If you were to describe the arts and cultural scene in Temiskaming what would you say?

I would say that Temiskaming is a vibrant community, filled with so much incredible talent, from artists, to theatre groups, to musicians, to dancers, etc., both French and English. From well-known artists and musicians, to new upcoming artists of all genres, Temiskaming is a culture rich region! I would say that what this community really needs is a community cultural center, which would provide a venue for the many varied talents in Temiskaming. We should all be very proud to live in such an amazing bilingual, artistic region!