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Toponymic education and practice and international cooperation: Cooperation with public information media

Cooperation with Public Information Media in Canada

Submitted by Canada **

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** Prepared by Kathleen O'Brien, Geographical Names Board of Canada Secretariat, Canada.

COOPERATION WITH PUBLIC INFORMATION MEDIA IN CANADA

Members of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) continue to interact with public information media in a number of ways both nationally and at the provincial/territorial level.

I. National level

General media inquiries

Media inquiries usually cover a range of subjects. Beginning in 2003-2004, the GNBC Secretariat started to include a section on media inquiries in its annual report. The types of media were not specified. In 2003 – 2004, the subjects included: World War II casualty naming; geographical place names in Canada that predate European exploration/discovery and settlement; what determines if a feature is an island; do three trees on a geographical feature constitute it as an island; correct name of an island group; use of “the” with the name of an island group; and the origin of Hans Island. Subjects covered in 2004-2005 included: information on Calgary; ownership of Cooper Island (in Plover Islands); use of names with accents and foreign names on an Atlas of Canada map; possible commemorative naming of geographical features in Canada following the death of Ronald Reagan; the differences between the geographical name search on the *Geographical Names of Canada* Web site and the *Atlas of Canada* Web site; and name changes of an island group in Saint John, New Brunswick. In 2005-2006, subjects covered included: Mount Mary Anne; Mount “Trudeau”; World War II casualties; the Premier Range (in British Columbia); Northwest Territories community name changes, and naming a local waterway in the Oromocto area and how to go about having the name put on municipal, provincial, and federal maps.

Radio, television, newspaper, and other media interviews

In 2002, Dr. Lapierre was interviewed during the evening of 20 October 2002 on TV Ontario’s (TVO) French network. He interviewed Ms. Jacob in a webcast earlier that year. Dr. Lapierre had a limited number of CDs with interviews from the first year of his webcast series available.

In October 2004, the GNBC Secretariat received a request for someone knowledgeable and willing to be interviewed on tape in front of a camera to discuss origins of place names. This was for a French TV show (*Les trophées de la langue*) with host Bernard Pivot, to be aired on TV5 across the world. Dr. André Lapierre, the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Nomenclature, Policy, and Research, was able to do the interview, for which the Secretariat is deeply appreciative.

During 2004 – 2005, Ms. Gisèle Jacob, the GNBC Chair, was interviewed for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio program *Sounds Like Canada. Le Droit*, a local French paper in Ottawa, published an article on the GNBC Chair, Ms. Gisèle Jacob

II. Provincial/territorial level

The following is just a selection of the means by which provincial and territorial members of the GNBC have interacted with the public information media between 2002 and 2007.

A Saskatchewan production film company completed a documentary film entitled, *World War II, Saskatchewan's Northern Legacy*. The purpose of this project was for wider Canadian recognition of the legacy that exists in the geographical features that are named for Second World War servicemen who gave their lives for Canada.

Radio shows provide a valuable means of providing information on geographical names. GNBC members and delegates from various jurisdictions, but notably Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario have been interviewed about specific items or on an ongoing basis. Mr. Gerry Holm, Manitoba, was interviewed for radio, Ms. Merrily Aubrey, Alberta, appeared on a radio call-in show, talking about the book *From Ada to Zoie*. In Alberta, *Heritage Trails*, a program of CKUA, a province-wide radio network, included a significant number of segments on Alberta's toponymy while it was in production from 1998 to 2005. Some of these segments had been featured on Industry Canada's Web site, but have now been archived at the Web site of Library and Archives Canada (<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/>). Both the Secretary of the Ontario Geographic Names Board (OGNB) and the Ontario Geographic Names Specialist were interviewed by CBC Radio, Thunder Bay, in regard to local naming issues including replacing derogatory names and war casualty commemorations.

Ontario regularly provides names and extent information to *Cottage Life Magazine*. The OGNB's 1993 publication, the *Historical Map of Temagami* by Craig K. Macdonald and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources staff was recently highlighted in an issue of *Legion Magazine*. The map includes the names of 660 features – lakes, rivers, creeks, islands, and highlands – all in the language of the Anishinawbeg.

The Geographic Names Specialist in Ontario provided information and assisted Ontario author, David Scott, research the OGNB records to complete the latest revision of his series entitled *Ontario Place Names*. Excerpts from Scott's book and other place name "facts" sent in by viewers are regularly featured as part of the nightly news by sports reporter, Lance Brown, of CTV television in Toronto.

In Alberta, a professional editor was hired to begin the laborious process of "cleaning up" the origin data field on the database. The editor was able to complete work on names found in volumes II and IV of *Place Names of Alberta*. Funds are needed to complete volumes I and III. It will then be possible to provide geographical and origin data on all official and rescinded names on the Internet for public consumption.

In making various toponymic works available in print or on the Internet, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec have issued press releases about these events to the media and responded to the inquiries resulting afterwards.

All jurisdictions receive inquiries from the media on a continual basis for information on place names, their official status, correctness of form, and extent of boundaries, location, and historical background. Other inquiries are concerned about why a geographical feature is named “Mount This-and-That” instead of “This-and- That Mountain”, why the generics “lake” sometimes precede the specific, and why some geographical names do not have apostrophes when they should have them.

Kathleen O’Brien, GNBC Coordinator, Geographical Names Board of Canada Secretariat
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