



# Y Bwletin

## Gwasg y Nant – Valley Press Mis Hydref 2008 – October 2008

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- Faggots & Peas/Noson Lawen ..... Saturday Nov 15
- Phoenix Players ..... Dec 4, 5, 6 & 7
- Carol Service ..... Sunday Dec 21
- St David's Banquet . ..... Saturday Feb 28
- Gymanfa Ganu ..... Sunday March 1
- Shannon Mercer Concert ..... March ?
- Ontario Welsh Festival - Kingston ..... April 24-26

### President's Message

Croeso, welcome and greetings to all.

Our annual Faggots and Peas Dinner and Noson Lawen will be held on November 15 at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

The Phoenix Players will be performing 2 plays on December 4, 5, 6 and 7: **Joe Carpenter and Son, An English Nativity** by Graham Clarke; and **A Child's Christmas in Wales**, adapted by Jo-Ann McCabe.

The Carol Service is on December 21 at 7:00 PM and is also at Westminster.

St. David's Day Banquet is going to be on Saturday, February 28/09 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The Gymanfa Ganu will follow on Sunday, March 1/09, at Westminster.

We still need volunteers to serve on the Executive Committee for 2008-09. The more people we have, the less work there will be for each person.

I hope you have had an opportunity to check out our reorganized website. We require someone to act as webmaster. Our current webmaster agreed to take on the job only until someone else could do so. Please let

us know if you are interested.

Please see this newsletter for more information about the upcoming events.

Lezlie Wood, President

### CALLING ALL TALENT!!

If you have an act yourself, or a talented child please volunteer to perform at the Noson Lawen on Saturday **November 15**.

Call **Alan Thomas** at 613 **829-2017**, or email at alan.thomas@sympatico.ca

Tell him what you can do, and let's build another great evening of entertainment together!

### Faggots & Peas Noson Lawen Saturday November 15

Westminster Presbyterian Church 470 Roosevelt Avenue.

Doors open at 6:30 pm with dinner at 7:00 pm. Cost is \$12.00 per adult and \$5.00 for children. Cash bar.

Reserve meal by calling **Bob Price** at 613 **521-1504** / email: robertprice@magma.ca

### Phoenix Players presents A SEASON OF PREMIERES!

December 4, 5, 6 and 7:

**Joe Carpenter and Son, An English Nativity**  
by Graham Clarke and

**A Child's Christmas in Wales**  
adapted by Jo-Ann McCabe

presented with **The Ottawa Welsh Choral Society**

Performances in The Chamber at Centrepointe

Curtain Times: 2:00p.m. Weekend Matinees  
7:30p.m. evenings

Tickets: \$15 for Adults, \$12 for Seniors and Students  
Children 12 and under are \$10

For more information, please call: 613 820-3675

**Christmas Carol Service**  
Sunday **December 21** at 7 pm

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
470 Roosevelt Avenue

(Everyone is invited to bring something to  
share with their tea or coffee after the service.)

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**Shannon Mercer Concert**

A concert is being planned in Ottawa to officially  
celebrate the release by Shannon Mercer of a CD of  
Welsh folk songs (70% Vocal, 30% Instrumental). This  
will probably take place in **March**, but we are still in the  
preliminary stages of organization. For more information  
see: [www.shannonmercer.com](http://www.shannonmercer.com)

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**The Ontario Welsh Festival**

Kingston, 2009

The Ontario Welsh Festival is delighted to announce  
that the guest choir for the 2009 Gymanfa weekend is  
Ger Y Lli Choir from Aberystwyth.

Under the leadership of Gregory Roberts, this young  
choir was formed in 2004 and consists of a mixture of  
young professionals, university and 6th form students.  
The choir competes regularly in the Urdd eisteddfod, the  
Wyl Cerdd Dant and the Llangollen National Eisteddfod.  
They won the youth choir competition at the National  
Eisteddfod in Swansea in 2004 and are featured on a  
CD of the best Welsh folk choirs released in 2007.

We look forward to welcoming a "youth" choir to the  
Ontario Welsh Festival, and I'm sure that we will be  
thrilled with a new and unusual repertoire.

Mark your calendars for **April 24-26**. We return to the  
Holiday Inn in downtown Kingston. St. Paul's Anglican  
Church will again be the venue for the concert on  
Saturday night and the 2 Gymanfa sessions on Sunday.  
Hefina Phillips

See [www.ontariowelshfestival.com](http://www.ontariowelshfestival.com)

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**My Little Welsh Home**

by W S Gwynne Williams

I am dreaming of the mountains of my home,  
Of the mountains where in childhood I would roam.  
I have dwelt 'neath summer skies,  
Where the summer never dies,  
But my heart is in the mountains of my home.

I can see the little homestead on the hill;  
I can hear the magic music of the rill;  
There is nothing to compare,  
With the love that once was there,  
In that lonely little homestead on the hill.

I can see the quiet churchyard down below,  
Where the mountain breezes wander to and fro,  
And when God my soul will keep,  
It is there I want to sleep,  
With those dear old folks that loved me long ago.

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**'Mabinogion, The Four Branches'**

Mabinogion, The Four Branches, the famous Welsh  
epic, is now available as an audio collection.

Beautifully recorded in Wales by author Colin  
Bradshaw-Jones, this 4-CD collection captures the  
spirit and excitement of these wonderful stories, and  
allows them to be experienced as they were always  
meant to be - heard.

Each of the four CDs is handsomely illustrated by  
leading fantasy artist Howard David Johnson, and for  
a limited time each of the four CDs contains an  
attractive art insert of the cover artwork. Plus, this  
presentation set includes an extra CD, an exclusive  
Introduction to the Four Branches at no extra cost.

See <http://www.themabinogion.com/>

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**Largest Ever World Welsh Male Voice Choir**

You can see and hear this event on YouTube.

See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R51Ni2IPppk>

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**Local**

Bob and Gemma Price are happy to report that their  
daughter, Megan, gave birth to a baby girl, Lena  
(pronounced LEE-na) on October 9, 2008. Megan,  
husband Brian Torgunrud, and big sister, Naomi, are  
all enjoying this newest member of the family.

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**Extracted from "PATAGONIA TRAVEL DIARY"**

by Myfanwy Davies

Editors Note: Apologies to Myfanwy - this was heavily  
cut down as the original was an 11 page diary

While most of you were enjoying a lovely  
Thanksgiving weekend in Ottawa, the members and  
friends of the North American Welsh Choir were  
making their way to Argentina for a 2 week tour of  
Patagonia. The touring group numbered 120, 60  
singers and 60 others.

I flew out of Ottawa on Monday, October 13th to  
Toronto. There I met up with my sister, Gwen, her  
friend Margaret Williams (also of London, Ontario),  
and Maureen and Graham Carpenter of Ottawa. The  
five of us were on a nearly full plane that left Pearson  
just before midnight, heading to Buenos Aires, via  
Santiago. We were given dinner shortly after takeoff  
(1 in the morning) and then tried to sleep. My seat in  
Business Class went straight back into a bed (thank  
you Rick), and I managed a couple of hours in the  
land of nod. The flight to Santiago takes 11 hours  
and it was fairly bumpy for most of the journey.

I was awake about 7:30 and soon afterwards was  
amazed to look down at the Chilean coastline. I had  
hoped to see mountains from the airport in Santiago,  
but was unprepared for the very rugged,  
mountainous terrain that swept straight down to the  
edge of the sea. All the land seemed to be in shades  
of brown, with hardly any habitation which reminded

me a bit of California. We saw a couple of valleys where there were green patches of field, but very little else. Further south, I noticed white snow on the caps of the mountains and this increased in volume as we neared Santiago. I can see why people go there to ski in our summer!

We landed in Santiago about 10:15 a.m. Ottawa time. Those of us continuing on to Buenos Aires, had to go through security and line up again to re-board. While we only had an hour for this, it did give us time to stretch our legs and check out the shops in the airport.

Our 2 hour flight over the Andes was uneventful, and we landed in Buenos Aires around 2:15 local time, which was only 1 hour ahead of Ottawa at the time.

Our taxi driver to the hotel didn't speak much English but with the help of a dictionary, we took in a few of the sights. B.A. is a huge city and many parts are poor. It is fairly densely populated and in parts reminded me of Singapore. This was reinforced when the shopkeepers came onto the sidewalks hawking their wares.

Our first hotel reminded me of ones in Paris. The front door is all you can see from the street. However it goes back a long way on the block, the rooms are large and clean, and the bathrooms are small but functional.

We decided to have some supper. We found a steak house and, while it wasn't yet open (they like to eat dinner very late in the evening), the waiter came out to ask us to come back at 7. Gwen wasn't sure if she had a dinner reservation or a date when he'd finished chatting her up!!

After a short rest, it was time to get dressed into something fancy and head out to a tango dinner. What a fabulous night! The Carlos Gardel Theatre seated about 300 on the lower level for dinner and our crowd was placed at long tables like at the Ruthin Medieval Feast. There was also a balcony that sat another 100 or so and the place was jammed.

The show was amazing. They had a number of pairs of dancers that performed all the variations of the tango dance. I had no idea there were that many different styles, speeds and forms. They had a live band that was excellent. On the way there we saw the only kosher McDonald's outside of Israel as there is a large Jewish population here. In fact there are lots of pockets of every European culture, but mostly Italian. Chile has a strong German influence apparently.

At the dinner Gwen and I had a pleasant surprise when we talked to a friend of our director, Mari Morgan. This girl, Catrin Morris (yes, same name as my sister) is from Wales but lives in the Welsh town of Trelew in Patagonia that we will visit next week. She came to sing with us, and do the MC-ing in Spanish for our concert Saturday night.

Argentina has about 35 million people and about 12 million of them live in Buenos Aires and surrounding area, which explains so much uninhabited land outside the capital. They have 3 million dogs!!!! One of the steadiest jobs is to be dog walker. We saw handlers with up to 20 dogs at once on a leash in the various parks. Surprisingly, there is not much mess on the sidewalks so they must stoop and scoop.

The plane to San Carlos de Bariloche in Patagonia was fairly quiet as we were all tired, but when we arrived two hours later, we were quickly thrust into a stiff, cold wind, that woke us up. The scenery is breathtaking. We were taken on a tour around the glacial lakes and through the mountain areas before going to our hotel. The area reminds me a little of the Canadian Rockies and Alaska. The Andes mountains that we were up against are very tall, with quite a bit of snow still on them. As it's spring, there are trees starting to bud, daffodils and tulips coming up and birds nesting.

The town is lovely, and definitely a place I would recommend and come back to. We found a pub that offered local beers (there are several micro breweries in the area), and a good variety of food. I had a nice steak with pureed pumpkin instead of potato. Eirwen Thomson told me their host family had mixed the mashed pumpkin with mashed potato and it was delicious. I'll try that when I get home.

Our waiter had studied English in London, and spoke English like he was from Hammersmith! Margaret and Fanw started to feel the effects of the short night, so they returned to the hotel, but Gwen and I had a liqueur at the bar with Bobby Thomson of Ottawa, and Ron Roberts from Delta, PA.

Gwen and I then went for a walk in the breezy town of Bariloche and went down to the overlook by the lake. The day was fairly clear with a few clouds skidding across the sky, and once again the view of the mountains was breathtaking. The town reminds me a lot of Banff in that it is a ski resort nestled in the mountains and has an abundance of hotels, restaurants and shops.

The buses left Bariloche at 10 and we drove up into the Andes. We saw all sorts of vegetation, part of which is a protected rain forest that is part of a National Park. This was the third National Park in the world, after Banff and Yellowstone. Our guide, Andreas, also told us about all the wonderful animals that live in the area, and told us that there are 225 animals for every person in that part of Argentina.

We heard that Pata means footprint, and gonia is a triangle or Y shape so the two words were put together to make the name Patagonia, which is an area shared by Argentina and Chile. That is one

theory as to where the name came from. At one point, there was a vote about where the border between the two countries would be, and the Welsh communities voted to remain Argentinean. Obviously the Argentineans are grateful.

We stopped for lunch in the town of El Bolson. A lot of hippies moved down there in the late 60's and 70's and it now has a thriving artist's colony with many interesting homes and businesses.

We continued our journey to Esquel after lunch, and again were amazed at the stunning scenery. As the road was not very good it was hard to nap, so we saw lots of it. This road goes the length of the country from north to south, about 3,000 km and has been voted the worst road in South America.

We arrived in Esquel about 5 just as it was starting to rain. This was a welcome sight as the roads and houses looked very dusty, and there is still some volcanic ash in the air from the Chilean mountain that exploded earlier this year after being dormant for about 9,000 years. Near Esquel is the ranch that Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid fled to when chased out of the United States by law enforcement. Unfortunately, not much remains, and we didn't have time to visit.

After check in, the choir had a short rehearsal and then went to the local Welsh Community Hall for a welcome dinner. They gave us a wonderful spread of sandwiches, quiches and other goodies and several speeches were made in Welsh, English and Spanish. At one point, Dic Jones checked out the small library attached to the main room and found a copy of his autobiography that contains the references to my grandfather. When I looked at the photos in the book I immediately found one of the school class with the headmaster (my grandfather) standing with the children. Another shiver moment.

About 10 am we boarded the buses and headed to the train station for a wonderful excursion. We took the Trochita, or small train up the mountain to Nahua Pan (not sure I have the name right). The train is circa 1920's and has been restored to use as a tourist attraction. They had heaters in each car which helped on the brisk morning, and a coffee bar car at the back. The trip up the mountain took nearly an hour, and when we got off at the top, we were greeted by some Mapuche natives selling empanadas (their snack version of a Cornish pasty), jewellery and rocks.

It was very windy and cool up there but it was nice to be out and stretching our legs. We returned to Esquel the same way and after a quick sandwich from the grocery store, we were on our way again.

Our next stop was Trevelin, another small town founded by the Welsh. Andreas, our tour guide took us to a

museum that told the story of the Welsh settlers in that area and it was fascinating. Following that we visited a small farmhouse that was built by one of the pioneers, and we saw the grave of a horse that had saved the life of one of the founders. While at the grave, Alan Upshall and I discussed the half inch of volcanic ash we could see all over the grass, trees and other things. They must have done a lot of cleaning, but I think it will be years before the ash is hard to find.

The venue for our second concert was entirely different from the glorious cathedral in Buenos Aires, as it was a community hall combined with a school gym. The audience sat in chairs on the floor or bleachers, and we were up on a high stage. For this show we had a number of guest artists and they were marvellous. There were dancers and local choirs and we even did a couple of joint numbers such as Yfory and Hafan Gobai. But it's kind of surreal to have all the commentary in Welsh and Spanish. In fact the only English we sang was a verse of Sia Hamba. Overall it was a wonderful concert, and our "groupies" thought we sang better than in the church.

Things move slowly in this part of the world, and the concert started late (8:15) and ended late (10:30) despite Mari cutting several numbers. However the night was not finished as we had another asada, this time at the local volunteer firefighters hall. Again we had salad, rolls, various meats, and ice cream washed down with wine, water or soft drinks. By the time I got back to the hotel and into bed it was after 2 a.m. It's no wonder I was tired.

After breakfast in Esquel, we boarded the buses for our 400 mile trek across the country to the Atlantic. At first the scenery was glorious as we were still in the Andes foothills, and we saw rock formations and vegetation that reminded us of the Grand Canyon and the Painted Desert. I have a gazillion photos.

But before I forget, you can see some photos on the choir website at [www.nawr.com/corcymry/](http://www.nawr.com/corcymry/) There are about 50 photos up there and I am in 12 of them. Not bad for a rookie choir member! There are shots from most of the places that I have mentioned.

After driving for about 4 hours, we stopped at one spectacular spot where the canyon walls rose dramatically from the roadside on one shoulder, and on the other we could see the very green and fertile Chubut River Valley. We all piled out of our bus to take photos and stretch our legs. The early Welsh settlers had landed in the Puerto Madryn area and then gradually moved inland along this river to the areas that they settled which are now Bariloche, Esquel, Trevelin and others.

Patagonia is known as having a windy desert terrain

and we were starting to see evidence of this. The spot chosen for our picnic lunch is called Rocky Trip and has a lovely little sign with a Welsh flag on it. If you walk the path up to the cliff top you can see the markings of the wagon trails used by the early Welsh pioneers as they trekked westwards up the valley.

As we continued our drive eastwards, the mountains and cliffs gave way to very flat land, dotted by very hardy vegetation that was dusty and windblown. During this time I started to feel some head and chest congestion, and a sore throat, but wasn't sure if it was due to the volcanic ash near Esquel, the dust at Rocky Trip, or a cold starting. It turns out it was a cold, but the other two didn't help much.

The new, 5 star Hotel Rayentray is located at the south end of a large curving bay, and we had a glorious view of the Atlantic Ocean, and the town of Puerto Madryn. On the whole this town is also very dusty, has garbage scattered all over, and has many buildings and sidewalks in need of repair. It took 20 minutes to walk from the hotel to the nearest shops and restaurants.

Fanw was up early and out the door to the Gorsedd ceremony which was part of the Eisteddfod in Trelew. The rest of us had the option of visiting the landing site of the Mimosa and I chose to participate in the 15 minute walk to the small museum and historical area.

The Mimosa was the ship that brought the first 165 Welsh settlers over to Patagonia. An advance party had come earlier to scout out the area and start preparations, but when the pioneers landed on the shores of what is now Puerto Madryn Bay, they had to live in caves carved out of the cliffs. These are now protected by fences but you can see the spartan quarters they lived in until they started moving inland.

The museum was interesting as it had models of the area and how the settlers had made their shelters, along with artifacts and lists of passengers. That was very moving for four sisters who were with our group. Their great grandmother came over on the Mimosa and her photo was in the museum. Later relatives moved up to Saskatchewan and these four ladies now live in Vancouver, Calgary and Regina.

We then headed for the buses which drove us to the town of Trelew, about an hour away. First we visited the Moriah Chapel which is still in use by the Welsh community. Our group filled the pews and with my "new" sister, Catrin Morris on the organ, we sang three hymns (Cwm Rhondda, Calon Lan, and Rachie) to the delight of the local ladies. Many of us wandered through the graveyard later on to look at the headstones of some of the early founders. It was a bit odd to see the stones carved in Welsh, and resting in desert sand, so far from the lush green of their homeland.

Our tour continued on to Gaiman and a visit to one of the Welsh tea houses. They STUFFED us with sandwiches, breads, cakes and bars, and we washed it all down with gallons of tea.

As we were leaving, one of the buses developed engine trouble so we had to load all their passengers onto the other two coaches to drive back to Trelew for our concert. Good thing we were all getting along well!! The location chosen was the Teatro Espanol, a small but delightful old and charming opera house. We had been told at the start of our tour that this concert was a sellout so we wanted to make sure all went well.

The concert went very well, but it was extremely hot on stage, under the lights. I was having trouble controlling my coughing and thought I'd have to leave at one point, but luckily brought it under control with a lozenge and some water.

After several encores, and standing ovations, we finally left the stage, gathered our belongings and boarded the buses for yet another late dinner. This asado was given by the Welsh community in Trelew and they had cooked 8 lambs over a large campfire. Quite a sight!!! The rest of the food, and wine, were equally delicious, and a good time was had by all. They also entertained us, starting with the school children, and then tango dancers and musicians.

However some of us were tired, or sick, and decided to go home on the early bus. That was at 12:30 a.m. On the way back to the hotel, we looked out the windows and saw millions of stars, including the Southern Cross. After the hour-long journey, I got into bed about 2:30 a.m. once again.

Friday was PENGUIN DAY and a definite highlight of the trip. Although I was suffering from the cold, I was able to keep it under control with cold capsules I had taken down with me. I showered, had breakfast, checked emails in the hotel lobby, and then got ready for the trip to Punto Tumbo.

As our buses were driving along the waterfront in Puerto Madryn, one of our group noticed a couple of whales swimming off shore. We stopped to watch for awhile and took some photos. I was surprised to see them so close to shore.

On the 3 hour bus ride to the penguin sanctuary, we were told how Patagonia had once been under water and that was why there were lots of dinosaur skeletons being found in the region. We also heard that there are 17 varieties of penguins in the world, all in the southern hemisphere of course. One theory is that the name penguin comes from the Welsh for "head" and "white" ("pen" and "gwyn").

The ones we were going to see are Magellanic

penguins, named after the explorer Magellan, since once of his crew had first described them many years ago. They stand about knee-high on us, and live in burrows, or under bushes. This surprised me as I had somehow envisioned them all living in ice and snow. This time of year is breeding season, and most of the nests were occupied. Apparently the males dig out a burrow with their feet and then go courting. They take their prospective mate to see the nest, and if she likes it, she'll mate with him and they will produce two eggs. If she doesn't like it, she will find a mate with a better nest. (Funny, I know some women like that.)

After 42 days, both eggs will hatch, but only one chick survives as the stronger one gets all the food. Both parents take turns going to the sea to get food (they eat anchovies) and returning to feed the chicks. Like most waterfowl they have oil glands that they use to waterproof their feathers for the time at sea. When away from this protected area, they can swim as far as Brazil to feed on the anchovies.

We arrived at the sanctuary about 1, but before we saw any penguins we saw several guanacos. These are llama like animals that live on the same land and co-habit nicely with the penguins. Occasionally there is an accident when they drop a hoof onto a fragile egg, but that's nature.

I headed down the trail and over the sand dunes. It didn't take long to spy the first little bird, hiding behind a small bush. In the two hours we walked around, I probably saw close to a thousand of the critters, and I think that each one has it's own personality.

Many simply slept on their eggs and ignored us, while others stood up and preened, and a couple of others gave us the evil eye when we got in their way. One of them actually chased Margo Lynn as he (or maybe she) was fascinated by the leopard spot design on her coat. We had been warned not to touch them, and none of us did, and also that the penguins have the right of way. At a couple of places there were wooden bridges over their paths so that we didn't discourage their treks between the sea and their nests.

Back at the hotel in Puerto Madryn , Fanw and I went to the hotel restaurant for dinner as we didn't feel like going into town for a long evening. We thought we'd get a fast and light meal, but we were wrong.

Somehow our order was lost in the kitchen. When other diners that came in after us were served, I kicked up a fuss. The staff pulled out all the stops and got our entrees to us about 75 minutes after we had ordered them, and 5 minutes after I complained. We told them we were helping ourselves to the salad and dessert bar and they were not to charge us, and that worked. But then when we asked for our bills, it was another frustrating experience. In all, it took us about 3 hours for

our quick and light dinner!

The Eisteddfod in Trelew was held in a hall that resembled a hockey arena. Our choir was supposed to sit in the bleachers with the other performers, but there was no organization to this so we were scattered all over and took some time to get into our positions to perform. Luckily Mari Morgan, the conductor, and Ron Bradley, the marshal, had organized our "hangers-on" to assist us in negotiating the steep stairs (tough for the dozen members with new joints, or the blind girl in the choir), rough carpets, and various other hazards.

While we were welcomed warmly by the people of the Welsh community and supported by the audience in our competition pieces, the judges were not so kind. We heard later that they liked that we were there, but had no intention of awarding us any prizes as they didn't want to discourage the local groups. As an example, our ladies penillion piece, which I admit had a couple of problems, was given third place, and we were the only entry in that category!!!!

On Tuesday we returned home. It was hot and sunny in Buenos Aires, and during the taxi ride to the airport, I was sweating in a light top and long pants. It was about 25 C. I was also surprised to see so many trees and flowers in bloom, as most had not yet shown their flowers two weeks earlier.

On the whole, the trip was very interesting, and a lot of fun. Eventually I will get my photos printed and put together an album that I look forward to sharing with you. It was unfortunate that so many people got sick, but I was pleased to see so much friendship and assistance amongst the members. Medicines were shared, those that had trouble getting around were assisted without complaint, and there were a lot of laughs to lighten the load. I made a lot of new friends, and strengthened some existing ones. The singing was fun and I'm looking forward to performing at the Gymanfa next year in Pittsburgh.

By the way, there is already talk of the NAWC touring New Zealand in three year's time. Could be interesting.

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### >> Creative Opportunity <<

Remuneration: Satisfaction and new friends

Experience: Optional

Tasks such as: - Become a member of the executive,  
- Assisting at a function,  
or with occasional phone blitzes.

If you can assist, even in a small way, please contact our President, Lezlie Wood, at (613) 225-8845 or by email to [ldwood7@sympatico.ca](mailto:ldwood7@sympatico.ca) or by mail to 205 - 1465 Baseline Road Ottawa ON K2C 3L9