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Your way is our track

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## **Message**

### **for the Initiative A Celebration of Mother Language in Canada**

The way we define our culture, heritage and the way we develop our language is determined not only by the past and traditions of our people, and by our physical area, but moreso it is defined by the individual perception of our environment, be it what we hear, see, experience or feel. A major influence on our development of these values is based and shaped by the behaviour and traditions of the people who accompany us through life and especially at the early stages, when we grow up.

As a result the bare definition of our culture and heritage may in some points substantially differ from the understanding of other generations, like e.g. our grandparents, parents, children or grandchildren. The "world", and with it our environment is constantly changing and evolving, and so is the impact on us, our education, opinions, deeds, our way of life, arts, and so on. With it comes a constant development and even change in language.

If we accept the impact of the different perceptual worlds between people as given fact, we need to be aware that the definition of culture and heritage of an ethnic group is really a sum of the definitions of many individuals, and that we should strive to include the different characterizations between generations into our own definition of culture and heritage to gain a greater understanding of ourselves and our people.

When I take a brief look on today's community structures, and the offer these communities are holding for their people, I cannot but notice two developments which are worth a thought.

Many communities are segmented into different subgroups or -communities to address a distinct group of people within their cultural and ethnic group. Why did these groups build in the first place, and why is there no unity between groups? I think, this might underly upon the different definitions of culture and heritage our people carry.

The second development I noticed is that an often practiced conduct may be the almost overrepresented inclusion of ageold traditions into cultural groups and organizations, and in some circumstances the most likely accidental oblivion to include most modern aspects of culture into the mix. Culture, which is lived, maintained, or developed by our young generations. It could be a nice thought that bestowing attention to these circumstances could bring unity to our people!

Our current task at hand, the preservation and celebration of our culture and heritage, is holding the wonderful opportunity to consider new ways of understanding our people, and the influence of our physical and temporal environments.

Andy Strohkirch,  
Shores Canada Ltd.

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