

# ENGLISH-LANGUAGE **ARTS** NETWORK

28 March, 2014

## UPDATE ON COMMUNITY TV INTERVENTION DEADLINE APRIL 22

Much has happened since we met last September and we have a few updates regarding Vidéotron's MYtv application that we want to share with everyone who attended ELAN's two public information sessions last fall.

### **Backstory**

ELAN has been concerned about this issue for many years because of Vidéotron's failure to provide community television for its English-speaking subscribers. A few years ago ELAN was encouraged by the Chairman of the CRTC to enter into dialogue with Vidéotron's French-language community TV channel (VOX at the time), and VOX management manifested absolutely no interest in working with English-language producers or providing English-language content.

When Vidéotron's licence came up for renewal last year, ELAN approached the new management of Vidéotron's French-language community channel (MAtv) and they were immediately receptive to working with English-language producers and providing English-language content. Rather than reserve a few hours on the French-language channel, MAtv management proposed to create an entire English-language channel, provisionally named MYtv. Many of you were in the audience on September 23, 2013 at Shift Space when MAtv's President, Isabelle Dessureault, and Director General, Steve Desgagné, presented their MYtv proposal.

ELAN, QCGN and many of you made interventions to the CRTC supporting Vidéotron's MYtv proposal on a conditional basis. We had concerns about the past and questions about the future, and therefore demanded that Vidéotron provide additional guarantees to the community and the CRTC of the benefits that the English-speaking community will enjoy. If Vidéotron responds to these demands, MYtv will benefit Quebec's English-speaking community in a number of important ways.

### **Winter Update**

A few days before the end of the CRTC's initial public intervention process concerning MYtv on October 7, the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations (CACTUS) decided not to collaborate with ELAN, QCGN, and everyone else who conditionally supported MYtv, and allied itself with a newly created group calling itself Independent Community Television Montreal (ICTV). ICTV then filed a formal complaint against Vidéotron.

ICTV's main charges against Vidéotron are that MAtv Montreal airs no community access programming, and that because MAtv broadcasts only in French it has ignored Montreal's English-speaking, aboriginal, and cultural communities since the '90s.

CRTC gave Vidéotron until March 17 to provide a point-by-point response to ICTV's complaints against its past record. While ELAN agrees with most of ICTV's complaints about the past, we believe they could be resolved by the new MYtv English community channel. That is why ELAN continues to support Vidéotron's MYtv proposal so long as Vidéotron fulfills its promises and its obligations to the official language minority.

#### **April 22 Deadline: Interventions re Complaint**

ELAN will submit an intervention commenting on ICTV's complaint, and recommending strong guarantees from Vidéotron to support meaningful community involvement in MYtv. ELAN will also explain that it does not support the ICTV proposal for four principal reasons.

- 1) ICTV's model is based on the work of unpaid volunteers. As an artists' network, ELAN supports the creation of content that would lead to paid work for producers, filmmakers, artists, and other creative
- 2) MYtv's model of 50% "open access" content which is sufficient for a wide diversity of community programming. We would like to see the other 50% of production speak to broad community concerns with higher production values.
- 3) ICTV's model proposes one multilingual station rather than two stations (MAtv French, MYtv English) and will reduce English community programming from 100% in the MYtv proposal to only 20% in the ICTV proposal.
- 4) ICTV's multilingual model will also reduce French community programming from 100% currently broadcast on MAtv to only 50% in the ICTV proposal. This would lead to unintended negative consequences between the majority and minority communities.

At this stage, interventions from the community are critical to ensure we have an English community channel with as much local control as the CRTC will allow. Next week ELAN will circulate a sample intervention outlining key issues and their implications, as well as instructions on how to navigate CRTC's website. You can submit comments via the CRTC website until April 22.

If you have specific questions please send them along by email to [guyrodgers@quebec-elan.org](mailto:guyrodgers@quebec-elan.org) or give me a call at 514.935.3312.

Guy Rodgers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Rodgers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Executive Director