

Taking the Left Seat



Aviation has always been part of QLF's DNA. It is therefore an apt metaphor for my introducing our new "pilot in command." As one of my first acts as President *Emeritus*, I want to introduce my eminently qualified successor, Elizabeth (Beth) Alling. The *Congress* is behind us, although it has given us our marching orders. On New Year's Day Beth became QLF's President and CEO. In aviation terms she has "assumed the left seat" in QLF's cockpit.

When I was elected by both the U.S. and the Canada Boards as the President and CEO in 1988, I recall the sense of excitement and, yes, nervousness entering my new role. After all, it was Bob Bryan's organization I was now running. Would our Alumni, friends, and donors accept "the new guy"? It was a time filled with challenge as well as opportunity. How much would I miss my old life as Director of the Atlantic Center for the Environment, where I had been for a decade?

Now nearly 30 years later, I see Beth in a similar transition. It will be my job as President *Emeritus* to make it as smooth as possible. I introduce Beth here to let our constituents — all of you —



In Belize with Wilfred Mutrie (left) and Philip Nadeau, QLF Canada Board Chairman, 2011 -

know what an exceptional person we have taking over as QLF's third President in our 56-year history.

Beth Alling came to QLF 15 years ago right after the events of 9/11. In the spring of 2002, I received a tip from her husband, Brad Hildt, that Beth was re-entering the job market as their son Charley was beginning school. A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, her background is in the news business as well as documentary film. Many were surprised at Beth's hire because conventional wisdom had it that Morris was looking for someone to do what Dr. Kathleen Blanchard had done at QLF so well and for so long in biodiversity conservation. Instead, I filled a different priority, bringing in someone who could help me in fundraising and communications, critical needs for QLF as we began a new century.

Beth threw herself at the job; her career literally took off. We all quickly discovered that she possesses a work ethic second to none. No job at QLF was too small; no responsibility too large. With

enthusiasm and a smile, she took over. Although she was not formally a QLF Alumna (meaning she had never worked as a Volunteer or Intern), she knew much about the organization and had many friends who had served the cause. With her family connections and Chuck Alling's



Husband Brad Hildt, son Charley, niece Abigail, Wassaw Island, Georgia, 2003 -



Beth's introduction to the North, L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, 2002 -

(Beth's father) Yale degree, a number of QLF Board Members felt instantly familiar with her. She moved among both the U.S. and Canadian Boards with ease, and they immediately were drawn to her as a person exuding charm and grace who could also get things done — and done well.

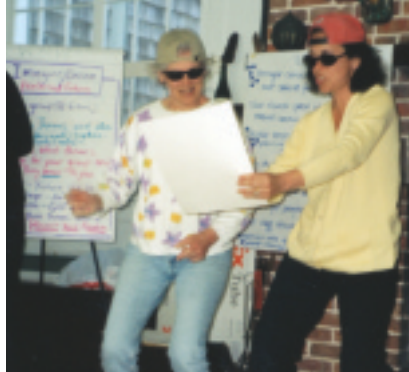
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Early in Beth's tenure she remarked to me how exceptional (in terms of numbers, talent, and diversity) the Alumni body was. Her observation translated to a recommendation that QLF should focus time and energy on developing this extraordinary Alumni "network." Seemed like a good idea to me. Why hadn't I ever thought of it? First, Beth felt it important to convene the QLF staff, along with Directors, to talk about the thinking arising from a strategic planning exercise just concluded as part of the QLF 2000 Campaign.

In February 2003, the entire QLF staff, a number of Board Members, and Bob and Trish Bryan assembled on Wassaw Island, a barrier island of Beth's extended family, protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, off the coast of Savannah, Georgia. For those staff members coming from ice and snow in Labrador, it was a dream destination. What a wonderful feeling of camaraderie ensued. Our facilitator, Alumnus Bill Elmore, grew more and more excited as he watched what was happening — the QLF staff coalescing around a new vision. Beth was exerting her Alling style and "can do" spirit on her new organization.



A friendly game of darts with Agnes Pike, West St. Modeste, Labrador, 2015 -



Improv session with QLF staff member Marcy Lyman, staff retreat, Wassaw Island, 2003 -

will simply have to be polite and not roll your eyes at her incessant puns.)

It is said that QLF is all about leadership, especially among future generations. The many Interns in these last 15 years that Beth has hired, mentored, and kept close would go through walls for her! I watched at the recent *Congress* as her team of ten young professionals bonded with one another and then rose to the challenge of pulling off an immensely complicated assignment. Who inspired them? QLF's new President.

Another quick story: shortly after Beth was hired, I complained to her that I was struggling in my efforts to make the Sounds Conservancy Marine Conservation Program into what I knew it could be. We had taken over the Sounds Conservancy (TSC) at the invitation of its Founder, Chris Percy, in 1995. TSC, like QLF, focused on supporting students, in



With Sounds Conservancy friends returning from a visit to Great Gull Island, Long Island Sound, the largest nesting colony of Common and Roseate Terns in the Western Hemisphere. Former TSC Director Prentice Stout next to Beth -



With U.S. Ambassador to Hungary, Bert Walker, The First QLF Alumni Congress, 2006 -

Let me pause here to expand on the virtues and personality of our new President. I want you to know why we at QLF are so excited. Beth embodies what is needed in a top manager: leadership; bold vision; a love of people; an ability to get along with all types of personalities; a professional humility; an ability to listen; and last but not least, an infectious sense of humor. (You



Beth and her "Dream Team" at The Second QLF Alumni Congress, Catalonia, Spain, 2016 -



Putting on a good face amidst swarming black flies, Red Bay, Labrador, 2014 -

TSC's case those interested in marine conservation among the "Six Sounds of Southern New England and New York". There was so much I wanted to do; the potential was enormous. But with all that was going on at QLF at that time I was not getting done what I wanted. Enter Beth Alling. Her sister, Gaie, is a Yale-trained coral reef scientist based in Southeast Asia. She is President of her own globally focused conservation organization, the Biosphere Foundation. The smell of the sea must be in the Alling genes. Beth took over the Sounds Conservancy, and it soon entered its "Golden Age" under QLF stewardship.

Soon after she was hired, Beth began to travel extensively – first in our home region (the Atlantic Region of northeastern North America), and later internationally because of our varied region-to-region programs that had developed beginning in the 1980's.

While QLF Vice Presidents, Brent Mitchell and Jessica Brown, managed our growing activity in

Latin America, Central Europe, and elsewhere, Beth focused on a regional program that had come a bit later to our portfolio of exchanges: the Middle East. In the early 1990's an anonymous Swiss foundation, followed by U.S. government agencies,



Desert field trip, Middle East Regional Meeting, Oman, 2012 -

had asked us to share the QLF model in this most challenging of regional settings. In the wake of 9/11 and the departure of pioneering QLF staff members Anne-Seymour St. John and Sierra Fletcher, Beth took on the Middle East Program without missing a beat. At the recent *Congress* the region represented by the most Alumni was, you guessed it, the Middle East! Beth has expanded the number of countries participating, refined the program menu, and has continued to encourage Middle East Alumni to work together across borders on community-based conservation themes.

In these final paragraphs I want to mention the two QLF *Congresses* in greater detail because they are Beth's handiwork and will ultimately frame her legacy. They are true institutional benchmarks as the history of QLF is recorded. The first was held in Hungary in 2006; the most recent in Catalonia, Spain, in 2016. Beth's contention all the way back to her first days on the job was that we needed a galvanizing influence to bring Alumni together, to have them meet one another, and especially to promote their working together in the future through the emerging Global Leadership Network (GLN).



The First QLF Alumni Congress, Budapest, Hungary, 2006 -



With QLF Director Rosemary Furfey, Ridge to Reef eco-tour, Gulf of Honduras, Belize, 2011 -

Soon after I arrived at QLF, we began to receive substantial funding to "share QLF's model globally" — now enshrined in our mission statement. Donors have continued to be interested in seeing us test our programming approaches and methodologies developed in the Atlantic Region, in other places around the world.



With friends at BirdLife International Meeting, Ottawa, 2013 -

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The two Congresses had many aspects in common, but also some dramatic differences. Beth put a talented team of young people together to manage each one. It is a testament to her management and leadership skills that each Congress was a resounding success.

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When you receive this, Beth will be in her first weeks as QLF's new CEO. I encourage you to reach out to her (as many already have!). Speaking for both Bob Bryan and myself, I can tell you that Beth is the ideal person to write QLF's next chapter. We are indeed lucky to have her.

Some years ago Beth worked with her father to write a book on his experience as a Lead Pilot in the 8th Air Force flying a B-17 over Germany during World War II. The book, *A Mighty Fortress*, now in multiple printings, recalls the individual story of another from the Greatest Generation. Chuck Alling would be so proud of QLF's new Lead Pilot. For her, the sky's the limit!

Welcome Beth Alling as QLF's President and CEO!
We are all proud to have our first woman in the left seat.
Congratulations and Godspeed.

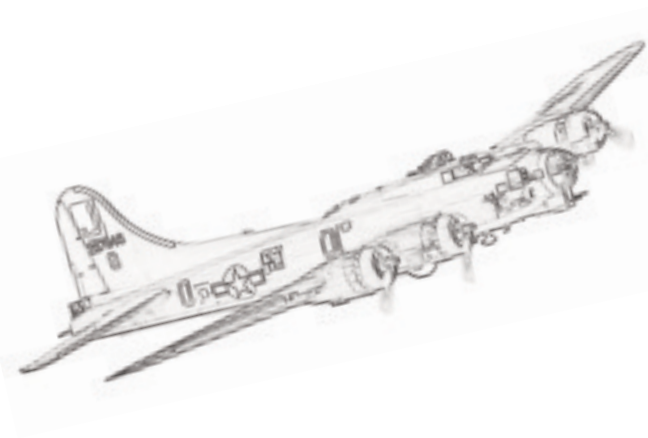
Larry Morris
President *Emeritus*
Quebec-Labrador Foundation
January 2017



Closing Session, Congress Workshop Plenary, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 2016 -



Chuck Alling (92) and his daughter Beth a few months before his passing in 2013 -



Alumni "flash mob," QLF Congress, Catalonia, Spain, 2016 -