



November 2016

Newsletter

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Assam Foundation of North America

Award ceremony of Peggy Carswell-Prize for Rural Women 2016

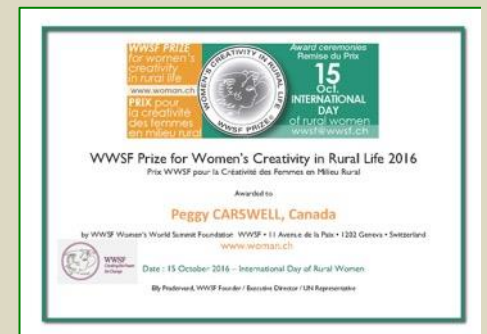
It's time to celebrate one of the Valley's own quiet heroes! Peggy Carswell, coordinator of the local non-profit organization, Fertile Ground, was recently awarded the 2016 **Women's Creativity in Rural Life** for her work with farmers and tea growers in Assam, India.

Carswell is one of this year's 9 laureates being honored by the Women's World Summit Foundation, an international, humanitarian network based in Geneva, Switzerland. WWSF's focus is to serve the advancement of women and children's rights, development and peace.

Over the past 18 years, Peggy has trained hundreds of people in Assam and other states in northeast India in the basics of organic farming. She's been instrumental in setting up 2 resource centers and demonstration gardens, and recently helped establish a 14-bed farmers' hostel to make it easier for people living long distances from the center to receive training.

When Carswell and her travel partner Kel Kelly first arrived in Assam in 1998, it was a time of civil unrest and insurgency. While things are now politically more stable, several regions in northeast India continue to struggle with underdevelopment, poverty and tension.

Initially, Carswell worked primarily with small-scale tea growers interested in shifting to organic cultivation. In 2003, to support the increasing number of tea growers and farmers reaching out for help, Peggy and a small group of volunteers here in the Valley set up Fertile Ground: East/West Sustainability Network.



Over the years, despite encountering many challenges, her efforts have touched the lives of many people. As well as continuing to teach farmers the basics of organic farming, she's also working with Kel Kelly to promote the principles of fair trade and helping small-scale tea growers find buyers here in Canada.

Interestingly, Assam is one of only two places on earth (the other being southwest China) where the tea plant is native. Since the British occupation of Assam, the tea from this state has enjoyed a special status among teas connoisseurs, yet native Assamese farmers make up only a very small segment of the industry and face difficulties entering the tea market.

Fertile Ground's work has been supported by local and district level Rotary Clubs, World Community Development Education Society, Edible Island Whole Foods, the Assam Foundation of North America and through contributions from individual donors.

Peggy will be formally presented with her award and a US \$1,000 prize at Fertile Ground's AGM on Sunday, November 27th. The event will be held at Creekside Commons, 2202 Lambert Drive, Courtenay from 2 to 4 pm. All are welcome.

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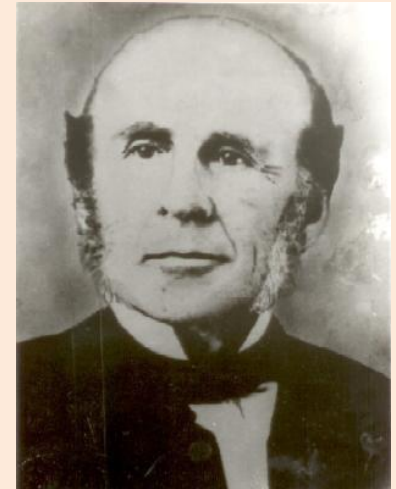
Nowgong Mission School, Rev. Bronson's Monument of Saving Assam

It has been over 175 years, the legacy of protecting and preserving the identity of authentic languages, heritages and cultures of the natives of Northeast India remains glittering over our history only because of unique contributions of a group of American Baptist Missionaries who came to visit our land in early 19th Century. They came to preach the neo-religious faith of Christianity, but instead they fell in love with beautiful land, its people and their virgin culture. Following the earlier passage of Rev. Nathan Brown and O.T. Cuttler, Rev. Miles Bronson, a linguistic and cultural pundit, the pioneer to pay more interest in natives languages for the development of which he authored books out of 'sounds and talking' of people, and to expand his taste he started setting up schools as early as in 1840.

While the East India Company, the contractor of the British Government for occupation and expansion of the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent, the American Baptist Mission went with them just to spread of their faith. By virtue of the Yandaboo Treaty, the British received the rights to 'protect' the Ahom Kingdom, Assam, along with the entire Northeastern region as default; and they ruled the region from Calcutta, the outpost of Bengal. For their convenience, they proclaimed a blanket of Bengali language over the entire Northeast Region, which was not acceptable to the American Missionaries. Especially, Rev. Miles Bronson contested the decision with documentation of originality and authenticity of individual languages, cultures and heritage. Finally, the East India Company had to recognize respective identity of native people that saved the rainbow of composite Greater Assam.

Rev. Bronson doubled down his effort to develop, magnify and expand those languages by bringing them out from limitation of traditional norm of colloquial and existing Vaisnavite sanctity. During his tenure in upper parts of Burma and Assam he took similar attempts for other tribes, but could not succeed; but his fight for protecting Assam from extinction, he did his work from the school that he established for Assamese language at Nagaon. Developing the Assamese in the light of modern English language served beyond his expectation; subsequently, some of the educated native intellectuals studying in Decca and Calcutta fulfilled his dream on our language. The pioneering school of education enjoys its history that Rev. Miles Bronson and his followers dreamt in the past.

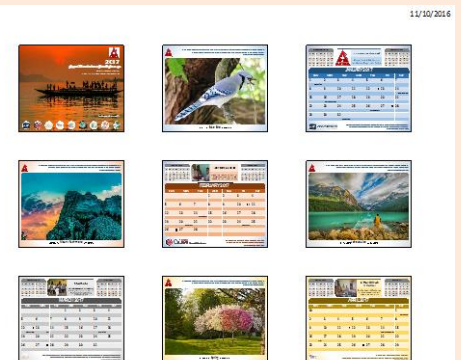
As the Baptist Mission left India, the school is still standing in support of our heritage, culture and language; but as an academic institution, the Mission School is in need of help to contest the modern age competition; because there is no more patron left after their departure. However, people belonging to local, regional and the state prefer to maintain its special identity as the venue of a monument of our savior, Rev. Miles Bronson.



2017 AFNA Calendar is HERE!

This year calendar will have some extra ordinary pictures taken by some of our amazing volunteer photographers. The pictures are from around the world covering nature, culture and environment. You have the three options to help AFNA with our Calendar Drive:

- 1) Buy one Calendar against a donation of \$20.00
- 2) Buy one calendar and option to adopt AFNA membership against a donation of \$25+
- 3) Or simple buy one calendar at \$9.00, we do hope that you will go for option (1) and (2) to help AFNA with our annual fundraising through this campaign.



Get your copy now by ordering at <https://goo.gl/forms/q3xF7qCtUKvt1iS73>

AFNA Income Statement – July-September (Q3), 2016

Account #	Account Name	Amount	Comments
Income			
1.	Contributions Income	\$3,757.20	Donations from Individual Donors
2.	Amazon Smile	\$23.41	Quarterly Amazon Smile contribution
3.	Matching Corporate Grants	\$0.00	Matching Grants from Corporations
4.	E-scrips	\$0.00	Quarterly E-Scrips contribution
5.	Calendar Campaign	\$10.00	Funds raised via Calendar Campaign in Q3, 2016
6.	Membership	\$0.00	Membership fess
7.	Assam Convention - Receipts	\$500.00	Funds raised through Assam Convention
Total Income		\$4,290.61	
Expense			
1.	Salary Expense	\$0.00	
2.	Project Expense	\$0.00	
3.	Outgoing Donations	\$3,900.00	Stipend to 8 Swabalambi Artisans (\$2,400) Support A Child Scholarship for SHED (\$1500)
4.	Operating Expense	\$120.00	Accounting Software Fees
5.	PayPal Fees	\$47.27	PayPal Charges
6.	Bank Fees	\$65.50	Wire Transfer Fees
Total 5500 - Operating Expense		\$232.77	
	Assam Convention - Expenses	\$0.00	
Total Quarterly Expense		\$4,132.77	
Net Quarterly Income (Loss)		\$157.84	

This holiday season support AFNA by donating to our projects!

AFNA's projects are helping thousands of people in need through our various initiatives and projects. You can find out about our projects and the kind of impacts the projects are having by visiting our website at <http://assamfoundation.net/>. Our monthly newsletters have been capturing AFNA's work and progress that AFNA is making throughout the year and you can take a look at all our newsletters at <http://assamfoundation.net/news-letters>. Even a small donation (\$25 to \$100) from you will make a lasting impact on someone's life through one of our projects. Please keep AFNA in mind as you open your heart this holiday season to help people around the world in need. Donate generously to AFNA at <http://assamfoundation.net/index.php/give-back/donate>. Together we can make a difference!



You can bring a SMILE!



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Award ceremony of Peggy Carswell by Ankur Bora
Nagaon Mission School, Rev. Bronson's Monument of Saving Assam by Atul C. Sarma

AFNA's income statement by Sarfaraz Taher and team

Get Involved:

Monthly volunteer call:
First Sunday, every month,
10am - 11am PT
Dial in: 641-7153272
Access Code - 457920#