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Quebec Heritage

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News



Skate Fantastic

When ice follies melted Montrealers' winter doldrums

The Archetypal Archivist

Esther Healy and the Richmond Historical Society

Learning out of Bounds

Paying tribute to the British and Canadian School ideals

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover: Skating Carnival, Victoria Rink, Montreal QC 1870, a composite photograph by William Notman. From the Notman Collection at the McCord Museum of Canadian History. I-45264.

EDITOR'S DESK

Heritage Culture

by Dwane Wilkin

Borrowing an approach taken by some other countries, Quebec's ministry of culture has put forth several interesting ideas for improving the province's track record protecting heritage. Beginning this month, the Culture Minister Christine St-Pierre's staff will visit a dozen towns and cities to gauge reaction to the proposals, contained in the proposed Cultural Heritage Act. As reported in this issue of *Quebec Heritage News*, the act aims to revise and expand considerably on Quebec's existing Cultural Properties Act which, since 1986 has provided the main legal tool and policy framework for heritage preservation. What difference, if any, will the new law make? The answer depends on the strength and imagination of local leaders and the support they can muster to apply the law's considerably broad provisions.

For more than twenty years municipal and regional governments have had the legal tools to identify and protect local heritage, including the power to enact by-laws safeguarding the architecture of whole districts. Developers and homeowners—including many who serve as municipal councillors—have invariably tended to regard with suspicion any intrusion into individual property rights. What portion, how to choose it and by which means communities ought best to preserve aspects of their built environment for future generations are political questions that require local solutions. Unfortunately, as the sorry physical plight of too many Quebec towns and cities attests, strong political leaders who appreciate the value of heritage and can defend measures to conserve it remain in the minority.

Because enacting and enforcing provisions in the new Cultural Heritage Act will still be up to local authorities, success at slowing or halting the destruction of historic landmarks and preserving significant landscapes intact is by no means assured. Most people working in the heritage sector know too well that just because local or provincial officials confer special status on a build-

ing, doesn't mean its protection is guaranteed. Only a shift in societal thinking can offer lasting hope.

The most ambitious and practically challenging part of the new Cultural Heritage Act is the emphasis it places on "intangible heritage," defined as the "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills ..." that communities identify with their heritage. In many ways, this broader statutory definition is a welcome improvement, because it formally recognizes that heritage embraces much more than isolated buildings and artifacts. The challenge will be putting this concept into action. If you think it's hard now getting the mayor and his side-kicks to support a by-law keeping strip clubs off Main Street or to find money in the budget to help convert buggy shops into tourist attractions, wait and see how enthusiastic they'll be about bestowing the title of "living heritage treasure" on community elders. Here, volunteers in the heritage sector can offer guidance.

It's also conceivable that Quebec's English-speaking communities might use the proposed heritage legislation to defend anglophone establishments from the potentially deleterious application of the province's French Language Charter. As I write, the Office de la Langue Française (OLF) has reportedly agreed to let the owners of an Irish pub in Montreal keep their collection of antique English-language signs, after investigating a formal complaint that the bar-room's decor violates Bill 101. That inspectors could take seriously the charge from some anonymous disgruntled toss-pint frankly borders on the ridiculous, but that's beside the point: the purportedly offensive signs, the OLF determined, have "historical and cultural value."

Calls from the leader of Montreal's nationalist St-Jean-Baptiste Society to outlaw the use of English in English hospitals are more alarming. Institutions such as the Royal Victoria and the Jew-

ish General are rooted in Quebec's social and medical history, offering services that contribute fundamentally to the city—and the province's—well-being. But they also represent a linguistic tradition with which 900,000 Quebecers identify. A question to consider, then, is whether this concept of "intangible" heritage as contemplated under the proposed legislation will embrace the most obvious forms of cultural expression we possess, namely language and speech.

In the long run, encouraging youth to better understand their communities' history will be at least as important as passing legislation, if cultural attitudes towards heritage are to improve. Take the the innovative Farms Alive education project currently being pioneered in the Eastern Townships. In a time of uncertainty for the family farm, the Eaton Valley Community Learning Centre in Bury is bringing elderly residents of a seniors home together with students from a local elementary school to share traditional rural life-skills. Just down the road the Compton Country Historical and Museum Society is developing a living history centre called Eaton Corner Homestead, a future showcase for demonstrating early colonial trades and crafts. Both are fine examples of how heritage enriches us all, and they deserve our support.

I'm pleased to report that the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network will be in New Carlisle on the Gaspé coast this April to launch the latest addition to the Quebec HeritageWeb. Over the last few months, QAHN has had the pleasure to collaborate on this project with the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), and we look forward to meeting face to face with the many enthusiasts from the Gaspé who've contributed time and expertise to create this online source of local historical information. I sincerely hope that we will also get the chance to meet with local teachers and students who are interested in using this resource in the classroom. See you soon.

TIMELINES

Brest quest, the movie

Namesake puzzle leads French historian to Lower North Shore

by Sophia Foley



Jacques Cartier dropped anchor here in 1534 to gather wood and fresh water. At least once researcher has counted the harbour mentioned on more than 100 old maps. Pinpointing Brest on the northern shore of the St. Lawrence River, however, has eluded historians and archaeologists for decades.

Now a retired professor and author who hails from the ancient seaport of Brest in France is making a documentary film about possible connections between his native city in Brittany and a Canadian place-name that suddenly vanished from the cartographer’s lexicon more than two centuries ago.

Last December, Alain Boulaire met with residents of several communities along Quebec’s Lower North Shore while visiting the region to scout film locations and possible interview subjects. The name Brest, he said, started appearing on maps of North America at the beginning of the 16th century. Cartier mentioned Brest in his journals the same year he recorded having celebrated the first Roman Catholic mass on North American soil. As to who named the site, and why, strangely, it ceases to appear on any maps after the 18th century, the record remains silent.

Complicating matters is the fact that early map-makers apparently couldn’t agree on where, precisely, to locate

their New World Brest. It turns up in various places along the Quebec and Labrador coast, though oral tradition places Brest in present-day Old Fort Bay, Quebec.

Some historians have claimed that Brest was possibly the very first French colony in Canada, predating Quebec City by a century. However, Boulaire contends that it was more likely a harbour known to Breton fishermen, who may not have built permanent structures during their stay.

Boulaire’s documentary, which is expected to be aired on French television at the end of this year, will focus not only on the history linking Brest, France and Quebec’s Lower North Shore, but will also explore contemporary cultural connections, featuring musicians and artists from the Coast talking about their daily lives.

Tourism organizations, mayors and economic development officials from Bonne Esperance, St. Paul’s River, Blanc-Sablon, and Lourdes-Blanc-Sablon are now considering ways to forge ties with their counterparts in the French city.

Sophia Foley works for the Quebec-Labrador Foundation in Blanc Sablon. Find out more about life on Quebec’s Lower North Shore by visiting coastfest@tourismlower-northshore.com.

Preservation code

Broader scope, less red tape promised in new heritage protection bill

by Dwane Wilkin

Quebec’s cultural affairs ministry recommends wide-sweeping changes to policy and legislation governing heritage conservation that could extend legal protection to landscapes and “intangible cultural heritage” while providing tax incentives and new potential sources of direct financial aid to support restoration projects.

The recommendations, contained in a discus-

sion paper titled, *A Fresh Look at Cultural Heritage*, were released in early 2008 in advance of a series of public hearings set to take place around in February and March. If adopted, Quebec’s Cultural Property Act, the so-called bible for heritage conservationists in the province since 1986, will be substantially rewritten and replaced by a new Act to Protect Cultural Heritage.

“The legislation on the protection of cultural heritage,” the study’s authors write, “will be one of a group of tools designed to strike a balance between incentive and coercion, ministerial and government action, and that of the cultural sector.”

Citing inconsistency and lack of transparency in the way that heritage is currently defined and granted legal protection, the draft bill’s authors propose to simplify and clarify the regulatory powers exercised by municipalities and the provincial government. For starters, the revised act contemplates just two levels of official heritage status, instead of four: classification by the Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women; and designation at the municipal level. These two statuses would, in turn, apply to five categories of protection: moveable objects, buildings, sites (defined as an ensemble of buildings), landscapes and “intangibles.” Heritage properties designated by municipalities, furthermore, would be considered by the minister to have the same level of protection as if they were classified.

Public hearings into the proposed Cultural Heritage Act began February 18 in Quebec City and will wrap up on March 31 in Gaspé. A number of historical societies and heritage organizations, including core and affiliate members of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) have been invited to participate.

Broadening government powers to recognize and extend legal protection to heritage landscapes and intangibles would mark a significant departure from the existing Cultural Property Act with its focus on historic monuments and buildings. Such a move appears consistent with trends in other jurisdictions, notably attempts to preserve people’s customs and traditions.

In 2003 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally defined intangible cultural heritage as “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases individuals recognize a part of their cultural heritage.” Proponents of the new Cultural Heritage Act point to the example of such countries as Belgium, Japan, South Korea Thailand, Romania and Haiti where individual “bearers of intangible heritage” are designated as “treasures” or “living national treasures” not merely as a tribute, but as a sign of protection.

The discussion paper’s authors concede that lawmakers will face an enormous challenge trying to define and protect heritage landscapes. How and by which criteria shall the law distin-

guish between man-made and natural landscape heritage? By whose standards will people judge whether a given landscape is worth preserving from future development? Other countries try to protect landscape heritage through administrative measures that promote high standards in architecture, urban design, land-use planning and the design of public spaces.

Under the proposed Cultural Heritage Act, municipal regional councils (MRCs) would obtain more legal responsibility than they currently possess for identifying and protecting various forms of heritage, including archaeological, architectural and historical sites, as well as landscapes. They would be required to include measures to document and protect cultural heritage in their development plans. Municipalities would have to adopt and implement heritage conservation plans.

Another measure contemplated would confer on municipalities the right to negotiate “heritage conservation easements” with the private owners of designated cultural properties, a practice currently in use in Ontario and elsewhere. Easement agreements define what an owner may or may not do with such a property, and also bind successive owners to ensure its future preservation. In return, owners are eligible for municipal tax credits or financial subsidies.

To help finance heritage restoration projects, the cultural affairs ministry is proposing a mix of local and provincial tax incentives as well as the establishment of a special “revolving fund” based on Quebec’s existing Cultural Heritage Fund. Created in 2006 with revenues from cigarette taxes, the fund is used to provide financial aid to municipalities and non-profit cultural heritage organizations. Instead of issuing grants only the proposed revolving fund would be restructured to offer loans to support projects that conserve and promote cultural heritage properties.

Groups wishing to present a brief during the public hearings must do so four working days prior to the scheduled hearing. Briefs may be submitted by email to *consultationpatrimoine@mcccf.gouv.qc.ca* or by regular mail to the following address:

Consultation Publique,
Ministère de la Culture, des Communications
et de la Condition féminine
225, Grande Allée Est, 2e étage, bloc C
Québec, QC G1R 5G5

For more information call: 1-888-380-8882. A full English summary of the proposals and a calendar of public hearing dates can be found on the ministry website at: www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca.

Pride of New Carlisle

Locals rallied to turn 148-year-old eyesore into local history showcase



The new Kempffer Cultural Interpretation Centre in New Carlisle on the Gaspé coast will finally open its doors to the public later this spring, following a half-million dollar makeover spearheaded by local heritage enthusiasts.

Built in 1868 by Loyalist descendants Robert Kempffer Jr. and his wife Sara Jane Langler, the building that houses the centre has been the focus of a community-wide restoration and relocation effort for nearly a decade. In 2004, the non-profit volunteer group Heritage New Carlisle, raised enough money through government grants and private donations to move the dilapidated former private residence onto a new foundation. Work has since proceeded to transform the interior into a multi-functional community centre that will feature a permanent local historical exhibit on its second floor.

“Finally, New Carlisle will rank amongst the many Gaspesian towns which take pride in their heritage and have a permanent centre to tell its story,” group president Normand Desjardins

stated in a recent communiqué. Heritage New Carlisle is a Core member of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN).

The bilingual town of approximately 1,600 residents, once the administrative seat of historic Bonaventure County, was founded by Loyalists who came to Chaleur Bay in 1784. Previously settled by Acadian farmers, the community later attracted a number of Scottish immigrants. Today it boasts several architectural gems dating from the 19th century, when professional and merchant-class families established their homes.

With its blend of French, American and British architectural influences, the restored and re-purposed Kempffer house seems a fitting symbol of New Carlisle’s cultural history and a worthy tribute to the community’s will to preserve local built heritage.

Directors of the QAHN plan to be in New Carlisle from April 26 to April 28, 2008 to help launch the new Gaspé Heritage Webmagazine, a joint undertaking with the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA).

Best wishes, Miss Phelps

Centenarian feted as living heritage treasure



College in Ste. Anne de Bellevue, reportedly against her mother's wishes but with the blessing of her father.

"My father took my side with the things I wanted," she recalled in a recent newspaper interview. Her career choice led her to a stint in the Laurentians town of St. Jovite teaching the children of lumber company bosses before returning to the Townships and taking upposts in Farnham, Waterloo and finally, Heroes Elementary School in Cowansville, where she worked for forty years.

In the 1950s, Marion Phelps was instrumental in reviving interest in the Missisquoi Historical Society, giving classes in local history and genealogy. Following her retirement in 1959, she was appointed archivist at the Brome County Historical Society and Museum in Knowlton, where she continued to work daily until the age of 95.

In 1981 Miss Phelps received a Heritage Canada Award, and in 2001 the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network established the Marion Phelps Award in honour of her outstanding volunteer contribution in the field of heritage preservation.. "Her life is a legacy and a heritage to us all," niece Sandra Phelps Marchand told *The Record* in a recent interview.

Family and friends helped legendary archivist Marion Phelps celebrate her 100th birthday on Feb. 9, 2008.

Born the middle child and only girl to a farming family in the Eastern Townships community of South Stukely, Miss Phelps seemed destined for a career in education. After finishing high school in Waterloo, she left to study at MacDonald

Grave state worrisome

Cemetery heritage conferences planned for May

Air pollution, vandalism, encroachment, neglect, a dwindling English-speaking population and a lack of able-bodied local volunteers threaten to the integrity of cemetery heritage in rural Quebec, a study reveals.

A Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) inventory of cemeteries at risk in four regions of the province has examined more than three hundred old burial grounds since October, 2007. The regions targeted by the study include Estrie and Montérégie in the Eastern Townships, as well as the Laurentians and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

In one sample survey of 35 pioneer cemeteries in the Lower Laurentians, 17 out of 35 cemeteries are considered at risk according to the rating methodology em-

ployed by local researchers participating in the Cemetery Heritage Inventory and Restoration Initiative (CHIRI). One hundred and thirty-one cemeteries have been deemed at risk to date. By far, the greatest number are located in the Eastern Townships. A number of sites have been completely reclaimed by forest and in some cases their whereabouts are barely known.

In May, QAHN will sponsor conferences on cemetery heritage in the Townships and Laurentians, especially geared toward volunteer trustees and caretakers. Detailed programme information will be made available in the March-April issue of *Quebec Heritage News*, but advance registration is recommended. See page 21 of the current issue for details on how to reserve a space.

Jean McCaw

1921-1998

The Sir John Johnson Centennial branch of the U.E.L.A.C. lost of one of its most dedicated members, Jean Darrah McCaw, who passed away suddenly at her home in Sutton on February 4, 2008. Jean was born in Sutton in 1921, educated there and later graduated as a registered nurse from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Montreal. She was married to the late Sydney McCaw and leaves behind four children, nine grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren and a sister.

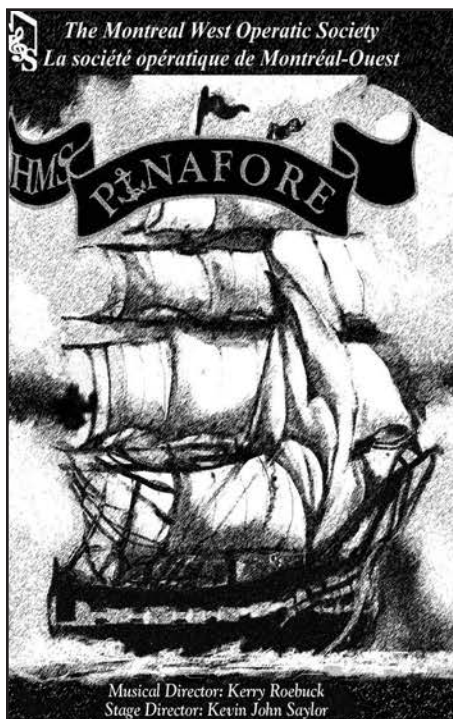
Jean and her husband joined the Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch in 1982. Jean was a regular documented member, descended from Loyalist Adam Best, and soon after joining took on the duties of the branch genealogist. An office that she diligently carried out until the fall of 2007, when due to diminishing eye sight she reluctantly resigned from the post. A large number of the branch members as well as those of the beginning of Little Forks branch owe their documentation to Jean's dedicated research.



To celebrate the bicentennial of United Empire Loyalist settlement in the Eastern Townships, the branch undertook to publish a collection of articles recording this history, a project in which Jean was especially active. The book, "Loyalists of the Eastern Townships" was published in 1984.

In 2001 Jean was made as a "Companion of the Most Honourable Order of Meritorious Heritage" in recognition of her contribution to the United Empire Loyalist Association. She was also a dedicated volunteer at the Brome County Historical Society in Knowlton. Her guiding hand and advice will be greatly missed by her friends. A memorial service at Grace Anglican Church in Sutton is planned for the Spring.

— Adelaide Lanktree

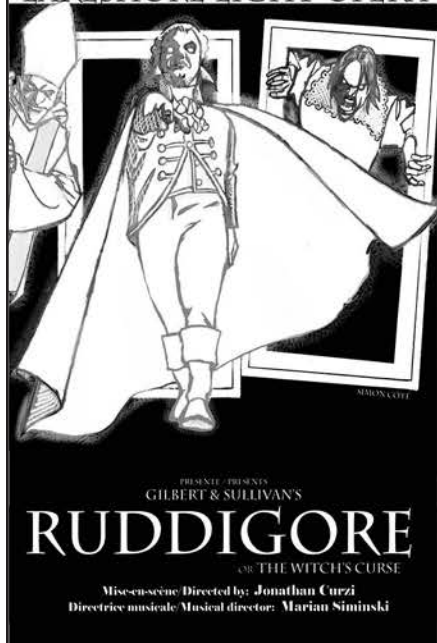


Royal Vale High School
5851 Somerled Ave, NDG
May 8,9,10 at 8pm / May 10 at 2pm

Haskell Opera House, Stanstead, QC
May 17 at 8pm

Tickets: (514) 486-5918 /
tickets@mwos.org

LAKESHORE LIGHT OPERA



John Rennie High School
501 Boulevard St-Jean, Pointe-Claire, QC

February 29, March 6, 7, 8 at 8pm
March 1 & 2 at 2pm

Hail! Unity

When musical rivals call truce, good things happen

by Rod MacLeod

There was a time when many communities in the Montreal area had companies who regularly produced the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. Now there are only three, and one of those is based in a university: McGill's Savoy Society. The other two survivors are the Lakeshore Light Opera, originally based in Lachine but now representing most of the West Island, and our own Montreal West Operatic Society, which happens to be the oldest Gilbert & Sullivan company in Canada. In recent years, with a smaller English-speaking population from which to draw performers and audiences, three societies must work hard to stay afloat. Each one competes with the others for a piece of a rather small pie.

This year, however, the three societies have gone beyond merely making sure they aren't all putting on the same show at the same time. In a spirit of "Unity is Strength" they decided to collaborate on such basic matters as publicity and ticket sales, even offering a season subscription for people keen to take in all three shows. Anne Whitehead, a McGill student who found herself producer of the Savoy's production of *The Mikado*, instigated the collaboration by contacting Dael Foster and Carol Johansen, respective presidents of MWOS and LLO, and inviting them and others on their production teams to a casual meeting over coffee at a terrace on Park Avenue in the late summer. This gathering led to the creation of a planning committee which worked out how the three societies could be mutually beneficial and together raise awareness of the work of Gilbert and Sullivan.

The highlight of their planning proved to be a joint concert featuring excerpts from the three current productions, by way of whetting the public appetite and raising funds for the societies' respective charities. Collaboration became the order of the day as each group put something into the works. Carol, who works at St George's Church in downtown Montreal, managed to secure this historic building (1870, the largest Anglican parish church in Quebec) as a venue for a nominal fee, and the LLO ticket director

David Johansen agreed to handle tickets for both the concert and the season subscription. MWOS agreed to produce the necessary advertising and the concert programme as well as "loan" their stage manager Mirna Morelli for the evening. McGill students arranged the front of house and served the audience a selection of drinks and treats afterwards.

The concert—entitled, appropriately, "Hail! Unity"—was a considerable success, attracting nearly 200 on a very cold Friday evening in January (the 18th). The three societies sang in the order their shows would appear. Savoy, dressed in their trademark red, performed excerpts from *The Mikado*, the production of which would take place at McGill's Moyses Hall two weeks later. LLO's selections (performed in white) were from *Ruddigore*, which will run in late February, early March at John Rennie High School in Pointe Claire. Third up were the MWOS singers (in blue) whose several numbers from *HMS Pinafore* set the tone for their upcoming production in early May at Royal Vale High School in NDG. As a finale, members of all three societies (over 100 in number, in red, white and blue—a la Union Jack) squeezed together in front of the church's grand altar for a stirring rendition of "Hail! Poetry"—the mock-oratorio a capella number from *Pirates of Penzance* which certainly rang the rafters.

The concert succeeded in attracting attention to the work of all three societies, who naturally hope this will translate into ticket sales. Even more rewarding, however, has been the spirit of cooperation and camaraderie, a welcome relief from the friendly but sincere rivalry that has characterized the societies' efforts for many years.

Lakeshore Light Opera's *Ruddigore*: John Rennie High School, Pointe-Claire, February 29 & March 6-8 at 8pm, March 1 & 2 at 2pm. Tickets: (514) 804-4900 / www.llo.org

HMS Pinafore will be presented at: Royal Vale High School, NDG, May 8-10 at 8pm, March 10 at 2pm; Haskell Opera House, Stanstead, QC, May 17 at 8pm. Tickets: (514) 486-5918 / tickets@mwos.org

Mighty is the pen

Quebec writers enlisted to mentor teen literary expression

by Sarah Haggard

One icy Saturday morning last December, twenty teenagers and a handful of adults convened on a street in NDG. They were there as stand-ins for rival gang members but they weren't planning to do any real fighting. In fact, they were united by a common goal: to shoot footage for a music video using their own material—a hip hop track about the gangs on Montreal streets and poetical probings into the meaning of violence and self-defence. These young artists had been attending writing workshops with spoken-word artist Osei “Manchilde” Alleyne, at one of the city's drop-in youth centres.

A few days earlier half a dozen students in Côte St Luc grumbled and goaded each other as they sat through the classroom launch of *The Original Minds*, their latest “zine” — a self-published collection of original writing. The talk was witty and derisive and implied indifference, but the acrostics, haiku, one-sentence stories and biographical poems told another story. During eight workshops with poet Larissa Andrusyshyn students had learned some new forms and were using them to give frank expression to their thoughts and feelings. Even the most reluctant among them had acquired the confidence to read his own poem to joshing classmates and the few visiting adults in the room.

These workshops are being conducted as part of the Writers in the Community program, a collaboration of the Quebec Writers Federation (QWF) and the Centre for Literacy of Quebec (CLQ). Established in 2003, the program is designed to nurture literary arts among students who've been left out of the artistic mainstream. In its first years the program has helped to fund collaborative projects with such organisations as Leave Out Violence, Head & Hands, the

Tyndale-St-Georges Community Centre, Voices of Youth in Care, and the Jewish General Hospital.

In 2007 the QWF and the Literacy Centre focused their attention on at-risk youth, with the aim of bringing writers together with young Montrealers to pursue non-traditional writing projects. Two six-week series took shape, with sessions run at Jeunesse 2000, an after-school drop-in centre for teenagers in Notre-Dame de Grâce, and at Mountainview High School, which works with Batshaw Youth and Family Centres to serve students with behavioural difficulties and/or social maladjustments.

The professionals working with the youth offered a lot of insight into what works and what doesn't, and the writers displayed an openness and flexibility toward the young participants. There is nothing straightforward about engaging the interest of teenagers. The young people this program aims to reach offer specific challenges, but the writers responded to these with humour and imagination. Undaunted by the students' informal attitudes to timekeeping or, sometimes, disdain born of diffidence, they have created an atmosphere of respectful literary teamwork and are winning their trust.

Until 2007 the Writers in the Community program was something of an experiment, testing the waters for a range of activities, seeking a focus to ensure the greatest impact for those most in need. The groundwork is now laid, and exciting new projects are expected in 2008.

Sarah Haggard is coordinator of the Writers in the Community program in Montreal, a joint initiative of the Quebec Writers Federation and the Centre for Literacy of Quebec.

Heritage Minute Video Contest

Students, Tell us
your story!

The Quebec
Anglophone Heritage
Network is offering
Secondary Level students
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about remarkable people
from Quebec's past.

For complete contest
details, visit our
website,
www.qahn.org
and click on News

First prize \$250.
Second prize \$150

Send your entries to:

Quebec Anglophone
Heritage Network
400-257 Queen
Street,
Lennoxville, Quebec
J1M 1K7

Deadline for
submissions is
April 30, 2008

LEARNING OUT OF BOUNDS

Montreal's British and Canadian School kindled reformist dreams of liberal education

by Rod MacLeod



Back in 1876, if you were Joe Beef—he of Montreal’s infamous waterfront canteen, notorious heart of the city’s underworld—and you were looking for a school for your child, you would have been well-advised to consider the British and Canadian School. Conveniently located on Lagachetière Street just north of the old town, the school had taught the children of poor families from all religious backgrounds for half a century. Although most students lived within a short walk, a large number travelled a fair distance from such neighbourhoods as Pointe-St-Charles and Ste-Marie, even though by that time there were other public schools available. The British and Canadian School’s

non-denominational approach would have appealed to many liberal-minded Catholic families—of whom Joe Beef, vigorous opponent of all organized religion, was one. Furthermore, during the 1870s the school had a special arrangement with the city’s two synagogues, the leaders of which paid for a rabbi to provide extra-curricular Hebrew instruction to the Jewish students attending the school, which was more practical than keeping separate Jewish day schools open. The balance of the British and Canadian School population was every shade of Protestant, especially those “non-conformist” sects such as Baptist, Congregationalist, American Presbyterians, and Plymouth Brethren whose families did not rank among the

city’s social establishment.

The British and Canadian School was founded in 1822 by a group of gentlemen whose political views might appear to us to be widely divergent until we remember the importance of liberalism in the early nineteenth century? at least until the outbreak of the rebellions of 1837-38 when religion and language began to get in the way of common pursuits. At the first meeting of the British and Canadian School Society, Horatio Gates, an American merchant, was elected President, and for Vice-President the members chose Louis-Joseph Papineau, speaker of the House of Assembly and leading figure in the Parti Patriote. The board of governors included such names as John Frothingham,

William Lunn, Alexander Ferguson, François-Antoine Larocque and Olivier Berthelet. These men were united in their commitment to the moral improvement of working-class families and in their opposition to institutions dominated by the established churches. Until that time, it was very difficult to acquire an education in Montreal without having to turn either to religious orders such as the Sulpicians or the Ursulines, or to the Royal Grammar School (for the rich) or the National School (for the poor), both run by the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, itself controlled by the Church of England and the High Anglican colonial establishment. It was entirely appropriate that the British and Canadian School Society should have chosen as their patron the Earl of Dalhousie, who stood out among governors-general for being Presbyterian as well as a strong proponent of non-denominational education.

Montreal's British and Canadian School Society modeled itself on the British and Foreign School Society, established in London some years before to bring non-denominational education to the poor in England and Ireland (hence the name "foreign" although the society would later open schools throughout Europe, the Americas, and India). In the context of Lower Canada, "Canadian" seemed a more appropriate word to describe the non-British element within the intended population. The Montreal society's mandate was to educate "the children of all labouring people or mechanics" (the term that would later be replaced by "industrial workers") according to non-denominational, though clearly Christian, principles. To this end, the school's governors were very particular about sanctioning the school books used in order to give offense to no one, and believed that its curriculum, by virtue of the "Christian simplicity, liberality and charity of its principles" was well-suited to "a community composed of persons of so many different religious denominations."

The school made use of the "monitorial system" developed in England by Joseph Lancaster, which allowed large numbers of pupils to be instructed without requiring a great deal of expense in terms of personnel or materials. In Lancaster's schools, one master taught the more advanced pupils (the "monitors")

who in turn taught the younger ones. Monitors were given special instruction outside the usual hours of 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. (2 p.m. to 4 p.m. during the winter months) in subjects such as English Grammar and Geography; during regular hours, monitors taught reading, writing, arithmetic and needlework, and the master supervised. By this method, it was claimed, "one master can teach 1000 as well as 100." The monitorial system was also as suitable for girls as it was for boys. Indeed, within a few weeks of the school's opening the number of girls enrolled was such that the governors decided to establish a separate schoolroom for them on the building's lower floor. A parallel ladies' committee was established, made up largely of the governors' wives but also a surprising number of single ladies: running a school for girls appears to have had a special appeal for young women. Four days after this committee's formation on 21 December 1822, the secretary, Miss Day, daughter of a prominent New England family, placed an advertisement in the local press for "a well qualified Schoolmistress to teach the female children Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Needle work."

After several years operating in temporary accommodation rented from school governor Olivier Berthelet, the British and Canadian School Society decided to erect a permanent building. As was usually the case, progress relied on social networks and political connections. In 1825 the governors received a £200 grant from the House of Assembly, the speaker of which was, of course, the society's vice-president. After purchasing a lot of ground north of the old city walls, the society received an additional £400 from the assembly to begin building a new school. James O'Donnell, the architect of the new Notre Dame church, was on good terms socially with Horatio Gates and came well-recommended by François-Antoine Larocque, who was chief warden of Notre Dame and secretary of the church building committee. As a result, O'Donnell drew up plans for a new school in the summer of 1826 at no charge to the society. The governors were delighted with these plans, noting that the building would be large enough to accommodate 414 boys and 232 girls (how they arrived at these precise figures is unclear) plus an apartment for the



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male teacher. To build the school, the governors chose John Redpath, a master mason who had recently done work on Notre Dame Church and repairs to the National School. Redpath's tender of £920 and the overall projected cost of £1,510 did not worry the governors unduly; they had confidence in "an enlightened legislature and a liberal public, alike capable of appreciating, and willing to aid every laudable undertaking." The cornerstone was laid 17 October 1826, and the new school was completed in time to begin classes the following September.

The school thrived for another ten years, at which point political tension resulted in serious cuts in government grants to education. Furthermore, the good will that had seen cooperation between French and English-speaking liberals did not survive the rebellions. "Since the troubles commenced," Baptist minister Newton Bosworth remarked in 1839, "several of the Canadian children have not continued to attend" the school, and as a result, "large numbers of children...are suffered to grow up without availing themselves of its benefits." It did not help matters that Lord

School. It was only in the 1860s that Anglicans agreed to participate in larger "Protestant" institutions and the British and Canadian School was brought under the jurisdiction of the city's Protestant school board—thanks largely to the efforts of William Lunn, now president of the School Society as well as school commissioner, who successfully argued

Apart from annual reports from the 1820s, the British and Canadian School has left one remarkable document which allows us a curious glimpse into its inner workings: a school register for the years 1873 to 1877, now in the archives of the English Montreal School Board. The register is a list of some eighteen hundred names of students applying for admission, and contains for each invaluable information such as age, religion, address, other schools attended and skills acquired. Boys and girls entered the school as early as four years old, and there were some applying at sixteen. A great many stayed for only a year or two, or even a few months; their attendance depended greatly on how much they were needed at home—no less a factor in urban areas than on the farm. That children attended at all despite how crucial they were to the family economy is, arguably, evidence that their parents valued education and tried to get it for their children even at great cost. That relatively high numbers of Catholic and Jewish children attended the school suggests that its liberal and essentially non-denominational curriculum was still valued. That the vast majority of these children came from addresses located in the low-rent quarters of Montreal confirms that the school continued to serve the children of "mechanics." One of these, sure enough, was Charles McKiernan, twelve-year-old son to the man known as that shady character of the underworld, Joe Beef.

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942	10/1/76	George Ross	22 Cathcart St.	8
943	7/1/76	Jarne Henry	24 Drum St. East	7
944	20/1/76	Lanison James	57 De LaSalle Street	13
945	27/1/76	Martin, Anne	105 St Urban St.	11
946	29/1/76	Cartier, Marie	55 La Gauchetière St.	6
947	24/1/76	Ross, Marie Alexandre	131 St. Augustin	10
948	29/1/76	Brown, Robert	472 St. Denis St.	7
949	4/2/76	Laurier Robert	484 Dorchester	6
950	6/2/76	Marahan Alice	123 St. Catherine	12
951	11/2/76	Denchais, G. D.	111 St. George	12
952	10/2/76	Richardson James	14 St. Raphael St.	11
953	4/2/76	Hayward Edward	614 La Gauchetière St.	12
954	12/2/76	Hayward Charles	"	8
955	4/1/77	Adams William	86 St. Augustin	13
956	7/1/77	Goldberg Israel	71 St. Charles	10
957	7/1/77	McKiernan Chas.	4 Comm. St.	12
958	4/1/77	Campbell Alex.	"	11
959		Campbell, Wm Jack	144 St. Vite St.	7
960		McDonnell, Addie	25 St. Augustin St.	11
961		Jackson Geo.	49 St. Antoine	12
962		John	"	8
963		Wood William	403 St. Donny	13
966		Wood James	"	9

Durham, himself a liberal reformer (known as "Radical Jack" in British political circles) was taken with the British and Canadian School's spirit of non-denominationalism upon which his followers based the seminal educational legislation of the 1840s. These education acts pleased liberals, as well as the bulk of the Protestant population, but were resisted by the Catholic and Anglican churches who saw non-denominationalism as a threat to their own levels of influence. As a result, public education in Montreal was divided along confessional lines as of 1846, the "Protestant" system nurtured principally by Presbyterians while Anglicans developed their own separate provincial network and the other denominations looking mostly to the British and Canadian

that the society's goals were not so far removed from those of the nominally confessional school board.

In the early 1870s the school was enlarged and spruced up for what became a second lease on life: it was only in the 1890s that the school board decided that the building was too old-fashioned for modern educational purposes and sold it to commercial interests. It stands today at the corner of La Gauchetière and Coté Streets in the heart of Montreal's Chinatown, for many years housing the Wing Noodle factory but otherwise not substantially changed from the structure Redpath built in 1826 and Lunn et al expanded in 1873. As such, it is one of the oldest surviving schools in the city, and enjoys a more colourful history than most.

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Sources: *British & Canadian School Society Annual Reports 1823-1826*; *British & Canadian School Registry, 1873-1877*; *English Montreal School Board Archives, Minutes of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners for the City of Montreal, 1865-75*; *Newton Bosworth, Hochelaga Depicta (1839)*; *Guy Pinard, Montréal: son histoire, son architecture (1986)*.

THE ARCHETYPAL ARCHIVIST

Sorting through the stuff of history is Esther Healy's passion

by Nick Fonda

In its forty-five year history, the Richmond County Historical Society has had only three archivists: Mackenzie Paige, who held the post for two years, Arthur Bieber, who took over till 1976, and Esther Healy, who after almost a third of a century continues to fill the role.

In a bright, spacious office on the first floor of the Melbourne Township Town Hall, books are neatly stacked on solid bookshelves, documents are stored in filing cabinets, newspapers dating as far back as 1864 and protected by sheets of acid-free paper are laid in specially-made drawers. Numerous photo portraits—some taken more than a century ago—fill the spaces between window frames and shelves. The old mixes with the new: a monitor, a keyboard, a printer, an answering machine.

It wasn't always so.

In 1976, when Healy took over, the Society's archives were crammed into a battered old filing cabinet tucked into a corner of the Richmond County Historical Museum. Other materials—documents, ledgers and books that belonged in the archives—were scattered all over. Sitting fifty metres from the St. Francis River, the museum occupies a house built in the 1860s that has served both as an inn and a hospital, as well as a private residence. Until 2004 when it was placed on a new foundation as part of a major renovation, the building also suffered regular if not annual flooding. Disaster struck the first year of her tenure and Healy, along with husband Don, a cabinet maker, scrambled to salvage the collec-

tion.

"I would bring papers home," Healy recalls. "I'd go to the upstairs of Don's workshop where it was warm and dry, and I'd lay out papers and books to draw out the humidity. Through a fortuitous coincidence, that winter I was invited to store our materials at Bishop's University to continue the drying process."

The historical society's archives were first moved to an upstairs room, and then, following the 1997 ice storm, Melbourne Township Mayor Daryl Grainger offered the group space in the Town Hall for a nominal fee. Here, in a room also used for research and as a meeting place for the historical society's executive committee, the collection has been stored safely for the last decade.

Despite a lifelong interest in history, despite an ulterior motive (access to primary materials which could be useful for her Master's thesis), Healy recalls that she almost turned down the volunteer archivist's post 32 years ago. At the time, her already full schedule included raising a one-year old son and holding down a full time job as an elementary school teacher. In the end, she accepted the volunteer post, and today the Richmond

County Historical Society archives are more extensive and more accessible than ever before.

Continuing work started by her predecessor, Healy set about making a systematic inventory of the collection's unpublished writings (letters, diaries, journals), visual records (photographs,



maps, etc.), oral histories, printed materials (local newspapers, books), electronically stored data, municipal, educational, legal documents and the historical society's own records. Every item was given a catalogue number. Finding-aids and indexes were developed and evolved to meet researchers' needs. And a team of volunteer researchers willingly helps her handling inquiries.

"I am constantly in awe of our forbears," says Healy, "for their knowledge of the times and their foresight to record this information, much of it by hand and some of it in an age when electricity did not exist."

Since the early 1990s summer students hired by the historical society have helped to computerize the archives catalogue. "I didn't have the computer skills back then, but one of our summer students, Shawn Laberee, set us up with a computer and began digitizing our data base."

Since then two or three students hired for the summer spend about half their time as guides at the museum, and the other half as archives assistants, sorting and cataloguing documentary material and assisting with the preparation of exhibits for special events, such as last year's 125th anniversary of the town of Richmond's incorporation.

"We keep getting material," Esther notes. "People phone and bring us things. Sometimes they leave things anonymously at the museum door. One night, well after dark, I was at the museum working late, when I heard knocking at the front door. It was a couple from Sherbrooke. She was the granddaughter of Dr. Hayes who, besides being a medical doctor was also the mayor of Richmond on six different occasions. He also wrote copiously on a variety of subjects, including local history. His collection, which was brought to us that night, is one of our gems."

Donations to the Richmond County Historical Society archives have made the collection a relatively rich source of primary and secondary documents related to Eastern Townships railroad history. "Quite a bit of it," says Healy, "is from the Orford Mountain Railway that used to run from Troy, Vermont, to Greenlay, across the river from Windsor a few miles upstream from Richmond. We also have quite a bit of material related to education."

Ironically, the education-related archives yielded little material used in Healy's thesis, or the book which followed, *St. Francis College: The Legacy of a Classical College, 1854-1898*. It used to be that people mostly called for genealogical information, but Healy says that with the proliferation of the Internet, the historical society gets far fewer queries of this type. Re-

searchers sometimes contact the archives for help locating vanished settlements in old Richmond County, such as Golden Bay, or Gore, or Lisgar, which were all railroad stops at one time.

For the last decade or so, parts of the archival collection have been used to mount small exhibits. An early exhibit was on the New England immigrants who were largely responsible for settling the Richmond area. Other exhibits have featured Dutch immigrants, Scottish heritage, the British soldiers disbanded after the War of 1812-14, the Protestant Irish, early schools and the railway. Healy has also been instrumental over the years helping to publish archival material, such as *The Mulvena Papers*. "It's nice to have all this material and information, but we want to try to share it."

The historical society archives offers general references for local history including listings for: Richmond, Danville, Melbourne, South Durham, Ulverton, Greenlay, Brompton, Windsor, St. Cyr, Denison's Mills, Kingsey, Trenholmsville, L'Avenir, Asbestos, Kingsbury, Kirkdale, Ship-ton, Cleveland.

Richmond County Historical Museum, located at 1296 Route 243 in Melbourne Township, is open weekdays during the summer. The archives, open by appointment only, posts its fee schedule on its web site: <http://pages.globetrotter.net/e-dhealy/>.

À la croisée des VOIX VOICES from the crossroads

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SKATE FANTASTIC

When ice follies helped vanish Montrealers' winter doldrums

by John Kalbfleisch

"Special efforts will be made to secure ready admission for the large number of guests that are expected to be present. No masks are to be allowed except on special application to the directors, which permission will be very sparingly granted. The fountain is to be enlarged and beautified. Some beautiful effects with colored lights are in course of preparation. The number of skaters promises to be even larger than on the last occasion."

- *Montreal Gazette, Friday, March 4, 1881*

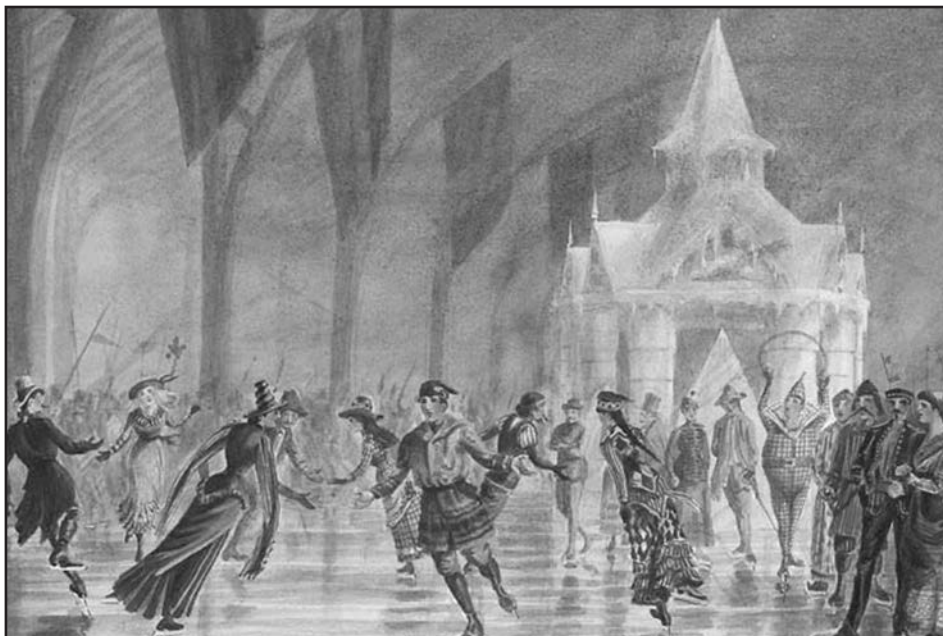
The occasion was the skaters' carnival that would be held the following evening at the Victoria Skating Rink. Skating was enormously popular among late-Victorian Montrealers, and never more so than when masquerades on ice were staged at the rink. Billed as "the largest and best in the world" when it opened in 1862, the Victoria rink ran between Drummond and Stanley streets, just above Rene Levesque Boulevard.

Even the slightly jaded tone of The Gazette's report several days later, once this last carnival of the 1881 season was all over, could not disguise the excitement of the event and the sheer fun that its participants must have had.

"Carnivals have so often formed the subject of graphic description that the task becomes a somewhat thankless one," sighed the report, echoing what the paper had said about a similar carnival at the rink two weeks before.

Nonetheless, we can be grateful the reporter tried. Above the glistening expanse of ice, we learn, were hung the flags of many countries "paying mute homage to a peculiar magnificence to be found only in this Canada of ours." At the centre of the rink itself stood a "glacial temple" whose beauty was highlit—literally—by a new technological marvel, "the soft rays from the electric light." On the temple's octagonal columns of ice, "coloured fires constantly shed their varied hues, producing from them and from the spray of the crystal fountain within the most enchanting prismatic effects."

The four hundred or more skaters who



came that night did justice to their fairyland surroundings. Snow Flake was there, and Queen of Colours and Robin Hood. So, too, were Jack Tar and Highland Lassie and Lone Fisherman and the Wild Man of Wicklow.

Some skaters, it seems likely, were a bit daunted by the challenge of originality and simply grabbed some odd props or clothes lying about the house: hence, surely, Nurse of the Red Cross Order, Lacrosse Player and Sea Cadet. The imagination of others, by contrast, might have exceeded our own, for what today are we to make of Incroyable, Unknown, Zip, Big Thing on Skates, That Thing on Ice and One of the Mysterious Three?

The evening did not consist simply of casual skating, however splendidly those participating were attired.

First, with a crash of martial music, the revelers took to the ice in two long lines, "one of the fair and one of the sterner sex," skating to the far end of the rink and then back. There, they began intermingling in the Maypole Dance, "skating in and out of the coloured bands with exquisite precision."

After a kind of intermission, during which everyone circled the ice for a while, a bugle call announced a new phase: "The hur-

rying stream breaks up into couples who gracefully glide away in poetic motion to that most graceful of all dances—a waltz on skates." When the waltz concluded, there was more of the general "whirl-round."

The biggest buzz of all, however, came with the arrival of the governor-general, the Marquess of Lorne.

He was on his way to Quebec City anyway and so arranged to spend an hour at the carnival between trains. Hearty cheering broke out as the bands struck up God Save the Queen and Lorne was escorted past the lined-up skaters to a dais at one end of the rink. He appeared to enjoy himself, talking amiably to the directors of the host Victoria Skating Club who were seated with him, as well as to the members of other clubs like the Tamarac Guards, the Full Moon Union and the alarmingly named Skids who skated by.

Only in Montreal could such a scene of magnificence be witnessed, Lorne said. And all for just 50 cents—25 cents more if you wanted a seat in the gallery.

This column first appeared in the Montreal Gazette, March 4, 2001. Reprinted with permission of the author.

BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

A brief history of the Scotch Road Settlement

by Sandra Stock

In the vast tracts of forest that still cover, or have returned with second growth to again cover, the Laurentians, traces of early settlement often have become next to invisible. The southern Laurentians are not, as many may think, only recently explored or developed. This is especially true of the western areas along the banks of the Ottawa River, particularly where the Rouge, the North and a few lesser streams empty into it.

Until the coming of railways in the mid nineteenth century, nearly all commerce, all travel and all emigration movements followed the water. The Seigneurie of Argenteuil, dating from 1682, was well placed on the southern reaches of the Ottawa, and at the portage point of Long Sault—near the town of Carillon—became at first a stop and trading centre for the French and then British fur trading route. Directly across the Ottawa from Carillon at Pointe Fortune is a still remaining trading post, the Williamson House.

Somewhat later, the towns of St. Andrews East, now Saint-André d'Argenteuil and Grenville, now the Municipality of Grenville-sur-la Rouge, emerged as important military posts and receiving points for settlers.

The building of the Grenville Canal began in 1819 as a way to circumvent the Long Sault rapids. This was also a defensive measure against possible invasion from the United States. The War of 1812-14 had, of course, just ended and it was important to the British colonial regime to protect this area of what later became Upper and Lower Canada,

then even later, Ontario and Quebec. Although the Ottawa River shores are now peaceful and the towns of Carillon, Grenville and St. Andrews East appear quiet, two hundred years ago this area was the focal point of the struggle for North America.

One of the first organized agricultural settlements in this western part of Argenteuil, above the Ottawa River, and north of the town of Grenville, was

lives and prosperity. These new arrivals were from the Isle of Mull and Lochaber and appeared to have been related to each other in Scotland. Names such as Cameron, Fraser, McLean, McPhee, et cetera, appear repeatedly in the Scotch Road cemetery list compiled in 1978. Although agriculture was the chief occupation, many of these Scots settlers had other skills and most were literate to some extent in both Gaelic and English with the better educated also knowing French. This was a poor, but ambitious group that valued education.

The Scotch Road emigrants were disappointed to find that their awaited land grants had not yet been surveyed. They were unable to actually live on the land until this survey was completed in 1820. Many of them had moved on to the already established Highland Scots settle-

ment of Glengarry County across the Ottawa where some had friends and relatives. However, by 1821, Scotch Road established itself, cleared the forest for farming, built homes and eventually a Presbyterian church.

The cemetery probably started as the family plot of the McPhees, as the memorial stone, erected in 1983, states, "The Scotch Road was first settled in the 1820's by Scottish immigrants. The English and Irish soon followed. This site, donated by Malcolm McPhee, was



what came to be known as Scotch Road. Today all that remains is a very old cemetery, located far into the reclaiming forest and of course the road itself. Off the busy Route 148 that links Lachute with Grenville, (hence across the Perley Bridge to Hawksbury, Ontario) chemin Scotch Road heads north, under the new Route 50, and onward back from the flat lands into the rocky and rough Laurentian hills.

This is where, in 1802, Archibald Murlaggan Macmillan, brought a group of Highland Scots emigrants to the Township of Grenville, to find new

used as a Protestant cemetery for the community from earliest times. His son Alexander deeded land for a Presbyterian church built in 1891 at the Scotch Road. Malcolm McGillivray and his son William looked after the church and cemetery for many years..."

The cemetery is, like all Highland Scots cemeteries in our area, on a high hill and back from the main road. The cemetery was much older than the church as the oldest remaining tombstone dates to 1818 (Archibald McPhee) and there possibly were even earlier burials of which we no longer have stones nor records. From the upper corner of the cemetery, the view is directly over Grenville and across the Ottawa River. Even with second growth forest all around, this is a very impressive site.

The Presbyterian Church built on Scotch Road still exists but has had a long and varied career moving about the district, first to Kilmar in 1931 and then to the Val Carroll resort in Harrington about fifteen years ago. It is still used for weddings and other events at Val Carroll, although its appearance is probably no longer that of its austere original.

There was also a school located at the Scotch Road settlement as census data indicates children attending classes from at least the 1860's. As many of these were teenagers, the school must have offered more than the usual basic elementary-only of most rural schools

of the time. There are also references to older adults going to this school to improve their literacy levels. One such instance was discovered on the Webster Family website that appeared in my searches for information.

More specific information was available about the Scotch Road post office. There was a post office from 1897 to 1920; an indication of the place being a "real village", at one time. The postmaster was Charles McLean from 1897 to his death in 1917, and then Mrs. Isabella McLean, his widow, took on this position. These country post-person jobs tended to stay within families and it was not unusual for a widow, a sister, a son or daughter to follow the pater familias in a kind of royal succession. As the Scotch Road cemetery list shows Isabella McLean dying at the age of 81 in 1921, she must have been employed by the post office until was 80! Again, this was not unusual in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the cause of vacancy for a postal employee is most often listed as "death".

Scotch Road had prospered in the nineteenth century while Grenville was a major river port and the canal thrived. However, once rail travel and better roads developed, the economy changed. Also, as the Scotch Road population grew and better employment became available compared to the rocky farms of the hills, the younger generation started to leave the land. By the 1930s, Scotch Road was really no longer a village and farms started being replaced by a few second homes at Lake McGillivray, and in one instance, by the Amy Molson Summer Camp for city children. The farther reaches of Scotch Road near the cemetery and beyond, have really almost completely returned to nature. The old foundation of where the church stood is still visible in the bush. There are other remnants of old buildings among the trees. The road itself is only a track with a

grassy middle at this point and beyond the cemetery, is not accessible by regular automobiles.

In 1977-78 when some descendants of Scotch Road settlers came to see the cemetery and record the data from the stones, it was in poor condition and had suffered many years of neglect and vandalism. The last burial, at that point, had been in 1948. However, it was at this time that the Scotch Road Cemetery Association was formed and an outstanding effort was made to restore and protect the site. Stones were re-erected and repaired, the memorial marker was installed, a gate and surrounding fence put up. There have even been some new burials of recent dates.

The isolation, and difficulty of access to this location is both positive and negative. Not many people know where it is, and it is somewhat hard to find, yet there is still trouble with on going vandalism from "party-ers". No one connected to Scotch Road lives close to it. The closest neighbours would be at Lake McGillivray and are second home and even this area is not close.

From the autumn of 2007, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) has been conducting a special project, the Cemetery Heritage Inventory & Restoration Initiative, to document anglophone heritage cemeteries at risk in several regions of Quebec, one of which is the Laurentians. Scotch Road Cemetery was the last one I saw before the snow came to cover any further explorations. High up, on an old fir tree beside the road was the remains of a homemade sign done in rough letters in red house paint on a plank, saying "Scotch Road Cem." Up the hill behind was the oldest remaining stone in what is most likely the oldest remaining anglophone cemetery in the Laurentians. As the website says, "Scotch Road, gone, but not forgotten."

Sources: Library & Archives of Canada Post Offices & Postmasters (on-line); Scotch Road Cemetery Association, cemetery list, 1978, by Clarence & Samuel Dodd; Elaine Fuller, Argenteuil Musuem, Carillon; Val Carroll Resort, Harrington, website.

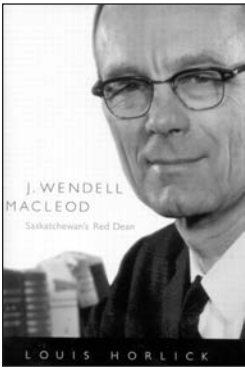
For more information online, visit www.scotchroadcemetery.com

Cracking Ice in Winter

By John Fretz

This job of infants
To check the thickness of ice
Cobweb superman cracks spread
Treading, sliding one foot further than the other
The surface buckles a bit
And whoa! A soaker
Icy wet
Over your boot
Like the exam you didnt study for
The shock, the carefree crime
Pleased you re free one more time

BOOK REVIEWS



J. Wendell MacLeod: Saskatchewan's Red Dean

By Louis Horlick

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007

222 pages, \$34.95

During my late teens I would often take the bus up to Ottawa on Friday afternoons and crash on my uncle's living room couch, sometimes on my way to a larger weekend event, sometimes just to visit. Uncle Wendell, then well into his seventies, had an apartment on Metcalfe Street with a view of what was then the Museum of Man (now Nature). At that time, he lived alone—indeed, no one else could have put up with the intense clutter of books, files, photographs, and boxes containing yet more books, files, and photographs, some of which usually had to be moved if you wanted to sit down. He did have an extensive network of friends, however, some of whom came to visit or on whom we would drop in: Alan Ross, for example, veteran of the Spanish Civil War, or NDP MP Stanley Knowles, or Helen Mussalem, a senior official in Canada's medical establishment who entertained diplomats in her high-rise apartment. Most often, Wendell and I would sit in his kitchen and talk about Norman Bethune, Wendell's former mentor, or about China or Haiti or other places Wendell had spent time, or about the countless problems the world was in. Wendell was a great talker, and famous for going down tangential paths to equally fascinating subjects before working his way back to where he'd started. I always left feeling exhilarated and somehow inadequate.

Wendell's life—colourful, unconventional, controversial—has cried out to be celebrated, and for years a number of people tried. Apart from having to navigate the often widely differing opinions on Wendell from within the extended family, biographers found Wendell him-

self a frustrating source towards the end of his life as he succumbed to Alzheimer's. It was with great delight, then, as well as considerable trepidation, that I have been awaiting publication of *J. Wendell MacLeod: Saskatchewan's Red Dean*, written by Louis Horlick, a former colleague of Wendell's at the University of Saskatchewan and author of other works on the history of medical institutions. Fortunately, the trepidation was unwarranted: Horlick is a model of restraint when it comes to his subject's personal foibles. Less fortunately, some of the delight was also unwarranted, perhaps for similar reasons.

Wendell was born in 1905 at Kingsbury in the Eastern Townships where my grandfather served as the Presbyterian minister. After a couple of other such posts, the family moved to Montreal where the reverend became a hospital and prison chaplain as well as a volunteer with numerous social welfare agencies. I remember my uncle telling me how impressed he was to be able to accompany his father on these visits and see first-hand the suffering of people who fell through the cracks of post-WWI Canadian society. Alas, Horlick spends too little time on Wendell's formative years—and I say this not just because I wanted more on Quebec, but because I think the social-work background, Wendell's involvement in the Student Christian Movement at McGill and his close observation of some of the most wretched living conditions in the Western world had a direct impact on the man's life-long commitment to universal health care. As a Saskatchewaner, and as a historian of medicine, Horlick does not seem to warm naturally to this subject.

He also passes rather quickly over the influence of Norman Bethune, under whom Wendell trained at the Royal Victoria Hospital in the early 1930s and whose achievements he strove to publicize in later years, most notably by helping organize a multi-day conference on the man at McGill in 1979. (I attended this successful event, and remember being blown away by how fascinating a talk on the history of blood transfusion could be, and by sitting right behind Donald Sutherland, who'd recently portrayed Bethune.) Horlick describes the headaches involved in putting the conference together, as well as the writing of a book on Bethune which Wendell co-authored in 1978 with fellow activists Libbie Park and Stanley Ryerson, but the context of the Depression, radical politics, and the drive for social welfare is lacking.

Horlick, not without reason, hastens from Montreal to Halifax (Wendell was a medical officer in the navy during WWII) and Winnipeg (he worked in the Winnipeg Clinic from 1946 to 1952) before lingering on what was the critical period in Wendell's working life: his two terms as Dean of the University of Saskatchewan's Faculty of Medicine at Saskatoon. Under the wing of North America's first socialist government, Wendell soon counted Tommy Douglas as a personal friend and worked to make the training of doctors compatible with the goals of universal medicine. When Douglas began to establish Medicare at the beginning of the 1960s, he found the Dean an invaluable ally in the battle waged against him by a large portion of the medical establishment. This, a turning point in Canada's history though an exhausting one in Wendell's, is treated in

some detail by Horlick, although again I missed a depth and breadth of context. Sure, the story of Medicare has been told elsewhere, but some background is necessary here in order to understand how the epithet “Red Dean” was hurled at Wendell, and why.

The book's later chapters are devoted in turn to Wendell's subsequent involvement with the Association of Canadian Medical Colleges, with the Millbank Memorial Fund, with the Bethune Foundation, and finally with the two most important women in the last three decades of his life: Helen Mussalem and Jola Sise, widow of Montreal architect Hazen Sise with whom Wendell had travelled through China in the 1970s. In 1986 Wendell returned to Montreal to live with Sise, and it was she who cared for him right up to his death in 2001.

By contrast, Wendell's two wives? Margaret Wuerpel, an unstable American beauty straight out of *Tender is the Night*, and Jessie McGeachy, who raised his children after their mother's suicide? receive rather sketchy treatment. I can understand why, given the conflicting information on these mar-

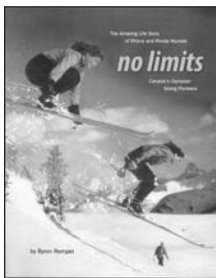
riages that Horlick may have received from family members; yet one feels the need for more. A paragraph that begins, “In fact Margaret did not adjust well to the move [to Halifax]” and ends “...she committed suicide” is packing quite a mouthful. We may not know how a man reacts to a tragedy, but for an author to say next to nothing implies that it held little or no importance, which was hardly the case.

This, I feel, is a central problem of many biographies that appear to be written in order to set down the narrative of a subject's life rather than to explore larger themes through the medium of individual experience. Despite the significance of what he accomplished, my uncle's professional life was perhaps not all that exciting, or at any rate requires more reflection than Horlick has given it in order to give it weight. What Wendell thought and how this thought developed over the course of so many decades, whom he knew and how he related to people, all the exhilarating discourse that so impressed me long ago in that cluttered Ottawa kitchen? these are much more than a sequence of events. The is-

sue of how a person is formed and how such a person helps shape the world is not tackled here. Perhaps I am being unfair to Horlick who makes no claim to be a philosopher. Perhaps I wanted the book that a political and social historian with a sense of Canada's social problems might have written rather than the one that a historian of medical institutions did.

The book is a good read, however, and does cover a lot of territory that many will find interesting. My young daughter was very impressed to have “someone famous in the family” and even took the book to class for Show & Tell, explaining, somewhat to my embarrassment, that her great uncle invented Medicare. Such is the way family lore gets translated? or at least parts of it. Whatever the extended family's views of Wendell, we all found ourselves on the same page in the summer of 2007 – or rather the same pages, namely Saskatchewan's Red Dean.

Reviewed by Roderick MacLeod



No Limits: The Amazing Life Story of Rhona and Rhoda Wurtele

by Byron Rempel
Twinski Publications

Byron Rempel has brought us a valuable perspective on the early days of skiing, not just in the Laurentians, but across North America. What inspired a generation of young Montrealers to treat their snowbound country as an opportunity for adventure and fun is open to debate. Were they a “Generation X” following the Roaring Twenties? Was it the likes of Émile Cochand and Herman “Jackrabbit” Smith-Johannsen that got them going? Did the Great Depression have something to do with it or were they all just crazy, suicidal fun-loving kids? These are the questions that stay with me after reading about the adventures of the Wurtele sisters, Rhona and Rhoda.

Rempel's story begins with the twins as children, two identical, inter-

changeable demons who were somehow born without any sense of fear, but with a hunger for adventure and the physical prowess to rise to almost any challenge. The miracle of their childhood is that they survived. He describes the influences of their elder siblings and the *laissez-faire* encouragement they received from their father, if not their mother. Knowing from early on in the book that they are still adventurous free spirits in their mid-eighties relieves the suspense to a manageable degree and increased my curiosity as to how they did it.

The Wurtele sisters are not unknown, but considering they have perhaps the largest collection of medals, ribbons and prizes in Canadian ski history, Rempel argues that they have not been properly recognized. He describes

them in the context of their cohort with the other wild skiers of the late thirties and the forties, and as the son of one of them, Pat Paré, I had heard and grown up with a lot of similar stories. His treatment of Hermann Gadner's contribution to Canadian skiing is long overdue and much appreciated.

Rempel does not limit himself to skiing, either, but describes the background of the twins' careers, including the war, their marriages and family lives, the women's movement and the lives, careers and successes of their children. The best known of these is Margie Gillis, dancer and choreographer, but we also learn about the adventures of their other children, their siblings and even get a backgrounder on Canadian business through their father's career at the

Southern Canada Power Company, a part of today's Power Corp.

That Rhona Wurtele Gillis and Rhoda Wurtele Eaves are still active skiers, sportswomen and leaders in the skiing community at an age when most people spend their time complaining of their aches and pains is truly inspiring, and Byron Rempel does them full justice. He describes all that they have done to encourage skiing over the years, from the Ski Jays program to the Twinski Club which grew out of the Town of Mount Royal Ladies' Ski School, encouraging competitive skiing among the mothers of

the children in the other program.

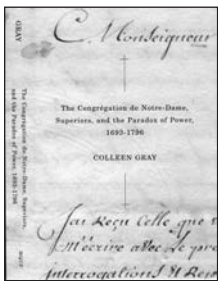
The book is also a treasure-trove of photos covering all aspects of skiing: people, events, locations, equipment and even clothes. If you are the kind of person who likes to open a magazine and read a short piece from time to time, the sidebars sprinkled liberally throughout the book will entertain and inform.

Anyone looking to get a perspective on skiing in Canada and to understanding the role that the Laurentian Mountains played in it would do well to pick up the book and spend a winter weekend reading it between ski outings. It is a

light, enjoyable read and a valuable historic summary at the same time. It is also an ideal gift, even if you don't know whether the receiver has it already. Chances are if he or she does, it has been thumbed to death or lent out to someone else.

Reviewed by Joseph Graham

No Limits is available at most English language book stores or through distributor Bruce Hollingdrake of Zeeba Books, email bruce@zeebabooks.com telephone 450 672-2662.



The Congrégation de Notre-Dame, Superiors, and The Paradox of Power, 1693 – 1796

By Colleen Gray,

McGill-Queen's University Press 2007,

205 pages, 13 B&W photographs, 13 tables, 7 maps \$75.00

In her recently released book, October 2007, Colleen Gray offers us an in-depth illustration of the private and public worlds of the abiding religious order *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*. Founded in 1658 in Ville-Marie by emigrant missionary Marguerite Bourgeoys, the biographical account recalls the era of Catholic revival and reform begun in medieval Europe. A time, notes Gray, of martyrs and mystics, a proliferation of religiosity and passionate expression of religious feeling, of church construction and the prospect of man and the fruitfulness of his actions.

Arriving in New France five years earlier from her birthplace Troyes, in the Champagne region of France, Bourgeoys' original goal had been to convert the infidel, namely the "Natives." But upon discovering a more fully developed French colony, she determined "to educate the daughters of the colony's habitants."

Assisted with the donation of an unused stable by benefactor Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, Montreal's founder, the first school was started, the property becoming the order's first real financial asset, which would be added to extensively in later years, thanks to the sacrifices of the sisters.

Gray is adjunct professor in the

department of history at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario where she teaches women's history courses along with pre- and post-confederation Canadian history. This scholarly work is dedicated to exploring power and its paradox between the peer-elected mother superiors, those who were under their guidance and those to whom the sisters, including the superiors, were obedient to, from 1693 to 1796.

The introduction aptly sets the stage and outlines why the author chose a specific century-long cross-section of Old Montreal's history. "The writing of this history" Gray states, "is in part an attempt to come to terms with the awful finality of an almost vanished visible past and to come to grips with the power emanating from it."

Despite approaching this work from a feminist perspective, part one of Gray's book relates the story of the institution's development chronologically, starting at the first stable school at the intersection of boulevard Saint-Laurent and rue Royer, where the *Congrégation* began almost 350 years ago. Readers are easily and quickly drawn into the drama that unfolds about places we are familiar with or heard mention of in Quebec's history books. As a historical narrative, the book is

filled with extensive documentation, dates, details, diagrams, maps, tables and photos, much of it colourful, interesting and brought to life in the form of direct quotes from various primary sources. Sentences, phrases and comments are taken from the correspondence and writings of Bourgeoys herself, the bishops, Sulpician priests and governors who ruled them, and Marie Barbier, Marie-Josèphe Maugue-Garreau and Marie Raizenne, the three mother superiors whose lives Gray closely examines.

In her early writings, Bourgeoys described her missionary teachers, the nuns of *Congrégation de Notre-Dame*, as "women of the parish." The economic activities these incredible women undertook to produce the goods and provide the services that were sold and/or bartered in order to survive and to continue with their spiritual mission of teaching the children of the habitants are described in detail. As filles seculières, they came and went from the mother house freely, were involved in the community-at-large, its celebrations, festivities and religious holidays, interacted with shop merchants and parish priests, cared for the parish churches by washing its linen; baking biscuits; making candles; doing needlework; tilling, planting and harvesting

the land; and raising poultry and livestock. In addition, the nuns were sent to teach in the community's various missions, set up mainly in the settlements along the St. Lawrence River, from Île d'Orléans, Quebec City, Trois Rivières to Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes, Boucherville to LaPrairie, where they lived with the habitant families they served. That is, until in 1698, when Bishop Saint-Vallier introduced a new constitution to the community that would require significant compromise and modification of the sister's way of life. The constitution stipulated the sisters would live from then on as cloistered religious women lived in France, no longer moving freely in the community, taking permanent vows.

The sisters found one point extremely difficult to accept. Until then, the young women, most were in their early to mid-teens and the majority were daughters of the habitant families, were novices for a year or two prior to professing or taking their vows. Saint-Vallier's reorganization of their institution required the women come with dowries, as they were indeed the brides of Christ. For many, this was an additional hardship for their family. Contracts had to be signed that the convent would receive funds monthly to pay for their room and board.

It is at this important juncture, that one realizes just how relevant the power and the power imbalances were between even the sisters themselves, for the cloistering created a hierarchy that had been until then non-existent within the convent, and those who interacted within society, in the other religious orders and the government.

In part two, Gray skillfully provides a picture of what life was like in the shoes of three mother superiors. She tactfully draws out and analyses the individual personal qualities and traits of these women with great detail. The reader can clearly feel, through this tangible evidence, their humaneness, strengths, frailties, misgivings and fears, along with their devoutness

and dedication to mission, as each faces challenges, from immense to minor vexations.

In 1768 the entire convent was destroyed by fire. Helped in-kind and in finances to rebuild immediately, the sisters wasted no time. They continued to teach in makeshift classrooms provided by the nuns of Montreal's Hôtel-Dieu, the hospital founded by Jeanne Mance, and received financial aid from the Sulpician priests and the community. Accustomed, according to the times, to poverty, sacrifice, penitence, self-mortification and hard labour, the congregation endures and thrives even after such hardships.

Although the sisters are no longer the owners of the extensive properties, such as Île Saint-Paul, the island south of Montreal known today as Nun's Island, devout members of Congrégation de Notre-Dame continue to be skilled educators of the highest standards throughout the province of Quebec and missionaries in the US, Latin America, France and Africa.

While this work offers the interested reader a well-researched, well-documented study on a relevant topic, it may, unfortunately, find appeal among a limited scholarly audience. Its rigour and the extent of its referencing could turn off those interested in reading about local history. At times some of the analysis seems redundant.

Full marks for the several tables that examine such things as the percentage of nuns from elite, merchant and habitant families and the fine list, useful to all genealogists studying their francophone lineage, of all members of Congrégation de Notre-Dame during this fascinating period of Quebec's history.

Reviewed by Barbara Lavoie

Barbara Lavoie, is a freelance journalist/photographer and professional social worker with expertise and experience in community economic development. She divides her time between Sherbrooke and Montreal.

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HINDSIGHT

The Guest List

by Nick Fonda

Could the province's brouhaha over reasonable accommodation have possibly come at a worse time for the poor folks organizing Quebec City's 400th anniversary bash?

If a birthday deserves to be feted, a 400th certainly does. After all, how many places make it to 400? Port Royal, Champlain's first attempt at founding a settlement in Canada, lasted less than a decade. Louisbourg (if you ignore the fact that it kept changing hands like chips in a poker game) did a little better, lasting from 1719 to 1760.

Let's face it, founding a settlement that could last was anything but easy. Back then there were all sorts of things to worry about: scurvy, smallpox, sailing ships sinking with the entire year's supply of Beaujolais. And, if you were French or Dutch, you especially had to worry about the British, who as we all know, were the ones who did in both Port Royal and Louisbourg.

Later settlements didn't necessarily fare much better. Just ask Murdochville, or Schefferville, or the dozens of other towns and small cities that popped up to exploit one natural resource or another. Yes, both Murdochville and Schefferville are still there, but as bare ghosts of their former selves. Of course, the demise of most of these more recent places had nothing to do with scurvy or the bloody Brits. Those places died because the big boys with the bucks from south of the border had had enough—or had taken enough—and shut them down like bars on the west bank of the Ottawa River.

So, let's take our hats off to Quebec City. And while our hats are off, perhaps we could step into the nearest Catholic Church and say a prayer or two for the organizers. Don't forget to check that the church hasn't been converted into a restaurant or apartments (prayers can only be answered if the church is still consecrated and open at least one Sunday a month).

Really, the 400th would have been no problem if Jean Charest hadn't suffered yet another brain cramp and called for a commission to look into reasonable accommodation. (Don't let the name fool you—he's Irish, and, some say, a closet Orangeman at that!) For the organizers of Quebec's 400th bash a delay of twelve or fourteen months in launching the Bouchard-Taylor Commission would have been a reasonable accommodation. But now! Well, the genie is out of the bottle. Pandora's box is open.

What the organizers wanted, what Quebec City wanted, heck, what the entire nation, — er, province wanted, was to celebrate the fact that back in 1608, with Samuel de Champlain leading them, twenty-eight determined French citizens built a small fort on

the north shore of the St. Lawrence River at the point where it narrows dramatically. Eight of them actually survived the winter! That's all the organizers wanted to celebrate.

As long as the party was limited to that, there was no problem. True, the organizers had to go to Las Vegas to find a headline singer. But she has a French name and probably still speaks a few words of French. It could have been a nice little family party—the aunts from Levis, the uncles from Three Rivers, the cousins from the Saguenay. Nobody really wanted to invite the whole global village. Would you want the aristocratic ruler of a former colonial power coming to your party? Of course not!

But now, after that closet Orangeman started this reasonable accommodation business, what are the organizers to do? How can the historical integrity of the party be maintained?

Did Champlain invite any Irishmen or Italians on his little boat, the *Don de Dieu*? No, he didn't. Was the cook on Champlain's boat Chinese? Absolutely not! Were any of Champlain's sailors from Israel or Iran or India? Not a one! No, that curly-haired choir boy with the misleading name really put a spoke in the wheels of Quebec City's well-greased organizing committee. With everyone now making a fuss about reasonable accommodation, a failure to include the Hungarians and Nigerians and Peruvians in the 400th anniversary bash is going to sink the party as quickly and surely as a North Atlantic storm swamping that little sailing ship overloaded with Beaujolais.

If only Charest had talked it over with Dumont and Marois. The three of them together would certainly have realized that the only reasonable thing to do was put off the Bouchard-Taylor hearings till next year. Or, better yet, put them off for another 400 years.

What can be done? Well, at this point, unless those prayers are answered (did nobody find a church?), it would seem not much. But, there is a silver lining, and perhaps someone can tell the organizers.

In 2009 Quebec City can have another party, a much more inclusive one. True, technically speaking it's only the French, the English, the Scots and the Germans who have historical antecedents at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. But that was a war—not house-raising—and is there any more popular human pastime than war? War offers reasonable accommodation to all. Or is that unreasonable accommodation?

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Designed by architect Edward Maxwell

Speaker: Edith Zorychta, owner of

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May 15, 2008, 7-9 p.m.

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Speaker: Rosanne Moss, owner of

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Moss & associates architectes

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Author Gail Anderson-Dargatz,

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