

CUPARUC CUPARUC CUPARUC
newsletter of the concordia university pensioners association
bulletin de l'association des retraité-e-s de l'université concordia

vol. 17, no 1, janvier/january 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the Executive of CUPARUC, I will start by wishing you all a prosperous, happy and healthy 2008. I sincerely hope you have all had great holidays with many family and friends, as indeed we did. It makes one feel younger to see the glee with which the young grandchildren welcome the snow and a white Christmas particularly those who are living in Vancouver and Maryland and rarely see it. One even thanked Granddad for having arranged it! (Not guilty – Honestly!!)

Socially, we had the largest (at least as far as I can remember) pensioners' holiday dinner with over 58 members and guests in attendance. Unfortunately our entertainer, Peter Paquet, came down with the flu and couldn't attend but an ad hoc couple of "singers" (suitably lubricated) backed up by Martin Franklin on the keyboard, did an excellent job of leading us in carols. The fellowship, combined with Barbara and Shirley's "mini-gifts" and numerous door prizes donated by senior administrators of the University, and a good meal from Chartwell's made for a great event.

Our other social event in the fall, the "Day at the Races" also went well with an increase in attendees of 50% over the previous year. Those that attended enjoyed the afternoon and some even made money!! Look for our next event this spring – date not determined yet! Have you something to suggest?

On the Pension and Benefits side, nothing much is new. In spite of the ups and downs of the market we are still in very good shape and there is no need to worry. For your information, the pension plan trustee, RBC Dexia, mechanically pays the pension not the University. However, if you ever have a question or problems in this or any similar area, you can call the University at local 3666, at pensions@concordia.ca or benefits@concordia.ca. It is not necessary to call the President at 6a.m.

May you all have a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year,

Graham Martin

MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT

Au nom de tout l'Exécutif de CUPARUC, il me plaît de vous souhaiter une année 2008 pleine de santé, de prospérité et de bonheur. J'espère que, comme nous, vous avez connu d'excellentes vacances auprès de vos proches et vos amis. La joie avec laquelle les petits-enfants ont accueilli la neige et le Noël blanc, surtout ceux et celles qui habitent Vancouver ou encore Maryland, nous a beaucoup rajeunis. Il y en a un qui m'a même remercié de l'avoir si bien organisé (je plaide l'innocence !)

Pour les activités sociales, nous nous sommes réunis vraiment très nombreux lors du repas de fin d'année, presque 60 personnes en tout. Un beau record, je crois. Malheureusement, notre «crooner» habituel nous a lâchés cette année, une infection à la gorge, mais d'autres collègues, la gorge bien arrosée, se sont portés volontaires pour le remplacer, accompagnés, bien sûr, par notre fidèle ami, Martin Franklin. Les minis cadeaux de Barbara et de Shirley, accompagnés des excellents prix offerts par divers membres de l'Administration (voir la liste) ont été bien reçus, ainsi d'ailleurs que le repas que Chartwell nous a servi. Joignez-vous à nos festivités en 2008.

Nous avons aussi à l'automne pratiqué à nouveau «un jour aux courses,» (voir les frères Marx.) Encore une fois nous étions plus nombreux qu'à l'ordinaire. Le groupe s'est beaucoup amusé; certains se sont même enrichis ! Nous envisageons à présent des possibilités pour le printemps.

Côté Retraites et Bénéfices, il n'y a pas grand'chose à dire. Malgré les montagnes russes qui caractérisent le marché actuel, nos finances se portent bien et il n'y a pas lieu de s'inquiéter. Pour votre gouverne, c'est notre fiduciaire RBC Dexia et non l'Université qui se charge des versements de notre retraite. Si vous cherchez cependant des solutions à des problèmes ou de simples réponses à des questions dans le même domaine ou un domaine similaire, n'hésitez pas à contacter l'Université : poste 3666 ou alors pensions@concordia.ca/benefits@concordia.ca.

Bonne et Heureuse Année
 Graham Martin

ÉDITORIAL

Que dire ? Le Président vous a déjà transmis nos vœux collectifs. Je me demande s'il n'aurait pas mieux fait de les transmettre à toutes les Bourses du monde mais, en fin de compte, tout se réglera sans doute, même si CUPARUC se contente d'envoyer ses vœux aux seuls membres. Espérons-le !

Je suis très heureuse aujourd'hui de pouvoir vous offrir un peu plus de diversité (très peu) dans la liste des contributeurs et contributrices à ce Bulletin. Dans l'ensemble cependant, je suis fort déçue du mutisme qui semble caractériser la plupart de nos membres. Je ne sais même pas si vous lisez le Bulletin, qui coûte pourtant cher à votre Association en temps et en argent. Est-ce que vous le lisez ? Dites-le-nous ! Est-ce que vous en êtes content ? Dites-le-nous ! Est-ce que vous en êtes mécontent ? Là, j'insiste un peu moins !!! Nous invitons régulièrement vos contributions et commentaires. **R.S.V.P.** Date d'échéance pour le prochain numéro : le 31 mars 2008.

PLACE AUX LECTRICES ET LECTEURS

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EDITORIAL

You will no doubt be happy to learn that I am completely ignorant on the topic of stocks and stock markets and will therefore be sparing you my unformed opinions on the topic. Now, if we could only encourage various radio and t.v. stations to learn from my example!!!

I am in fact much more concerned with the general silence that seems to reign among our membership. With every Newsletter, we have one, sometimes two (Heavens!) new contributors. On the whole, however, we have no proof that there is anyone out there to justify all the time, energy and postage stamps involved in publishing it... It seems to be all a question of faith, and I'm not really very good at that either! So... Do you actually read it? Write and tell us so. Are you pleased with it? Do write and tell us so. Are you displeased with it? I think I won't push that one! We regularly invite you to send in your contributions and comments but, as the poet said : "No answer came the stern reply." **R.S.V.P.** All before March 31, if you please.

READERS' COMMENTS

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Nous remercions vivement :

Many thanks to the following who donated door prizes for our annual Christmas luncheon:

Dr. M. di Grappa, Acting President,

Ms. K. Assayag, Vice President, Development & Alumni

Dr. N. Esmail, Dean of Engineering Dr. D. Graham, Dean of Arts & Science

Mr. P. Bolla, Assoc. Vice President, Facilities Management

Mr. Y. Gosselin, Asst. Vice President, Human Resources

Ms. L. Lipscombe, Director of the Bookstore

Ms. K. Sheanan, Director of Athletics

Mr. M. Strang, Director, Centre for Continuing Education

Ms. S. Magor, Director Environmental Health & Safety

McKibbens Pub

Anyone look familiar?



Vous connaissez ?

Hommage spécial à quelqu'un de très bien connu dans l'université.

Lucie Lequin en est l'auteure; elle a passé neuf ans à la tête du Département et le connaissait très bien.

Pierre L'Hérault a bien servi l'université Concordia. Il a été longtemps directeur du Département d'études françaises et y a pratiqué une modernisation certaine des cours et programmes; il a fait partie de nombreux comités; il a même été "Fellow" de l'Institut Simone de Beauvoir qu'il avait toujours soutenu.

Dans la communauté universitaire externe et culturelle, il a aussi occupé diverses fonctions, dont vice-président de l'Association des littératures canadiennes et québécoise, membre de comités de rédaction, chroniqueur de théâtre. Il nous a fait honneur.

C'est cependant surtout pour son rôle d'influence sur l'institution de la littérature québécoise qu'il mérite d'être spécialement reconnu. Il a su influencer le corpus le plus lu et y ajouter des auteurs alors considérés comme mineurs, dont Jacques Ferron. Il a aussi été parmi les pionniers qui se sont intéressés à l'écriture des auteurs migrants au Québec. Il a laissé sa marque, et son oeuvre critique continue d'être une référence d'importance. Tout aussi révélatrice de ses idées novatrices est sa contribution à la transformation de l'enseignement de la littérature québécoise. Rapidement, il a su identifier le caractère multiculturel des étudiants de Concordia. Pour les intéresser à la littérature québécoise, il a compris qu'il ne pouvait se limiter, ni dans ses cours magistraux ni dans ses séminaires, à présenter une culture ou une littérature refermée sur elle-même et n'ayant de place que pour les «pures laines». Il a donc parlé d'ouverture et s'est mis à ajouter aux lectures obligatoires des oeuvres d'auteurs nés à l'étranger ou encore non reconnus par l'institution. Lui et d'autres au département ont su, en toute complicité de pensée, changer une discipline qui, il y a vingt-cinq ans, se pensait surtout d'une façon unique. Il a pris des risques. Il a aussi laissé des traces. Sa pensée critique est reconnue à l'étranger comme au Québec.

Le département a organisé en son honneur un colloque intitulé «Théâtre en mouvement». Outre les communications savantes et les performances d'artistes, des collègues d'autres universités comme certains

de Concordia lui ont aussi rendu hommage. Tous étaient unanimes à reconnaître qu'il a laissé sa marque dans le domaine de la recherche et de l'enseignement de la littérature québécoise.

En nous quittant cet hiver, il laisse un grand vide derrière lui. Nous présentons ici nos plus sincères condoléances à sa famille.

Une pomme par jour éloigne le médecin, pourvu que l'on vise bien!
Winston Churchill

Vieillir, c'est aller aux funérailles de ceux qui auraient pu assister aux nôtres.
Tristan Bernard.

Merci, Bérengère.

Sunday Morning - Reflections

by Alex Sengbusch
Loyola / Concordia, Computer Systems '68-'83

It is Sunday morning and I am following my usual routine. Pick up a coffee and drive to the lake with a clear view of the water. For me, there is a certain attraction that any body of water holds, you look at the waves, they move back and forth, so mesmerizing, so elementary, so unpredictable, so different from one moment to the next. The coffee on top of the dashboard steams up the windows my mind wanders off...

I see this huge cruise ship. There are people everywhere, there is panic, all want to board at the same time, mostly woman and children, lots of uniformed sailors, soldiers and luggage to the rafters.



An elegant young woman stands beside the gangway with one child on each hand. The crew urges her to board, but she refuses. She is clearly distraught but there is determination in her face. I hear noises in the distance, don't know what it is but sounds like artillery. Some buildings are collapsing close-by and start burning. Someone yells: "Red Army".

"All aboard"! The lines are cut and ship steams out of the harbor and is well on the way to the open sea, when suddenly, there is an explosion, a huge fireball, sirens go off. The ship is listing. The ship sinks. Then silence.



The year: 1945, January 30th, a bitter cold and gray day. The ship, a former cruise liner that plied the Mediterranean in better times had served as a hospital ship for some time, with a large Red Cross painted on it's sides – was hit by a torpedo. There was room for 1500 passengers but on this day there were more than 10,000 refugees cramped on board, the sick, the infirm, the old and the young. Few survived. The biggest maritime loss in history.

Current navigation maps mark the spot as "Obstacle # 73" in the Baltic Sea, the site is off limits for diving - a loss much bigger than

the Titanic.

The young woman who refused to board was my mother, I was three years old – thanks mom!

We were always connected to the sea and the family firm owned several ships to conduct their trading business. Some pictures survived. The one shown on the left, the Sailing vessel "Anna", from 1880 was named after my great-grandmother. It was not surprising that we all had a good sense about the sea. And this was my introduction.



I wipe the steam off the windshield, the sweat off my face – and taste my coffee. That noise? Just a couple of bikers riding by. Let's enjoy the rest of the day here in sunny, southern Ontario.

CAMERA Attacks Ha'aretz
 Dr. Stephen Scheinberg

Andrea Levin the Executive Director of the so-called Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America has aimed her latest poisoned arrows at Israel's great, venerable newspaper Ha'aretz, in the pages of the Canadian Jewish News. I add the "so-called" because her organization's real concern is not with "accuracy" but with the agenda of the Israeli and American right wing.

First, Levin attacks the newspaper's editor David Landau for remarks he is alleged to have made at a private dinner with Condoleeza Rice. He has termed CAMERA's version of his words to Ms. Rice, a complete distortion of what he said. The only thing we can be sure of is that he did encourage the United States to actively intervene in the peace process and force Israel to make a political settlement with the Palestinians. There are many of us Jews and non-Jews throughout the world who think it is high time that the United States cancelled the blank check it has given to Israeli expansion and make clear that in the interest of both the U.S. and Israel, a two-state solution must be on Israel's immediate agenda.

However, most of Ms. Levin's attack on Ha'aretz is based on the newspaper's supposedly frequent condemnation of Israel as practicing "apartheid". Indeed, as a regular reader of the English edition I can testify that the word has sometimes been used by Ha'aretz reporters and editorialists. However, Levin offers no quantitative study of the term's use in the newspaper and so we are left with only anecdotal evidence and no evidence of the context in which the term was employed.

I do not use the term "apartheid" in my own discourse on Israel because like any analogy it is freighted with meaning, in this instance from its South African origins, and cannot therefore be exact. I also find that many Jewish readers and listeners tune out the content when the word is used. Yet, we should be clear that as invoked by Ha'aretz writers the term "apartheid" is reserved for what is happening on the West Bank and there, most objective observers, a group which does not include Ms. Levin, would acknowledge that conditions of the Israeli occupation bear a close resemblance to the original South African practices.

There is no such thing as a benign occupation. Akiva Eldar, the award winning political columnist for Ha'aretz, Gershom Gorenberg and other recent writers have made it abundantly clear that the occupation, including the government and the army, serves the interests of the settlers. They have stolen Palestinian land; they have taken the largest share of water rights, harassed Palestinian farmers, and denied them access to their fields. Ms. Levin does not like the word "apartheid" but would she settle for say "massive injustices"? I think not. CAMERA and its adherents are at the service of the settler movement and those who believe in a greater Israel, no matter the cost to human rights, the costs to Israelis and Palestinians who will continue to die, and the cost to Israel's reputation.

Ms. Levin claims that Haaretz is engaged in the continual defamation of Israel when it voices criticism of not only the occupation but of Israel's treatment of its own Arab and Bedouin minorities. She and others seem to believe that this somehow imperils Israel. Perhaps she would prefer the compliant style press of the old Soviet Union in which no criticism of government actions was permitted? As Zionists we should rejoice that Israel has a free press in which the issues of the day are ardently debated. We should be proud that when our own North American journalists and academics read Haaretz they understand that democracy and critical thinking are alive and well in Israel and that there is a Zionism that can still promise peace, justice and human rights.

CUPARUC is grateful to our colleague for allowing us to reprint one of his radio talks.

CURAC/ ARUCC AND THE CURAC CONFERENCE, May 21 to 23, 2008
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY AND UQAM, MONTREAL

This is the first announcement of the Annual CURAC conference and AGM, which will be held this year at Concordia University and Université de Québec à Montréal. As Chair of the Local Conference Organizing Committee, I welcome you. First the CURAC background:

CURAC/ ARUCC, as you know, is the Federation of Canadian university and college Retiree Associations, of which CUPARUC was a founding member in 2001. Currently our institutional membership includes Associations from virtually all Canadian post-secondary institutions, with an estimated 18,000 individual members on over fifty campuses in every Canadian province. CURAC/ARUCC has a double mandate: first, communication: to gather, organize and distribute important information about retiree rights and

benefits to our member institutions; and second, advocacy: to act as advocates for all or any members (institutional and individual, faculty and staff) whom we can help, with our combined pan-national weight. Examples of the first are our surveys of non-medical and medical benefits in our member-institutions, and our briefs to national and provincial commissions. Examples of the second include our interviews with the federal granting agencies, to urge equal treatment on grant applications for retired faculty, and our support of individual associations in countering prejudicial changes in their pension plan.

Many of our activities and offerings are reported by means of the sessions of our Annual Conference: the work of our Board Committees, and other topics of importance to retirees. This year there will be sessions, among others, on changes in pension law, on federal policy on mental illness in the elderly, on the results of our latest survey on post-secondary benefits for retirees across the country, on "elder law"--by two senior lawyers, and on opportunities for aboriginal post-secondary education and courses in aboriginal culture.

The CURAC Conference at Concordia begins with a reception on the afternoon of May 21st, two full days of chaired sessions, a luncheon on the 22nd, a banquet on the evening of the 22nd (on the campus of our co-host, UQAM), and probably an excursion on the 24th to the 200th anniversary celebrations of Quebec City. There will be some reduction in registration and other fees for Concordia retirees.

A formal announcement with registration information will be distributed in February. Meanwhile, for more information, please contact me:

Howard Fink
Chair 2008 Conference LOC
: howard@seabark.ca

Roch Maynard
Co-Président du Congrès
meynard@videotron.ca

There is the story of a patient who was in the recovery room following some rather delicate surgery.

Still being under the effects of the anaesthetic, the gentleman called the recovery room nurse over to his bedside and whispered in a mumbling voice a question that sounded like, "Are my testicles black?" Not believing what she heard, she hesitated but he repeated the question at least twice then, while the nurse reached under the covers to find the answer, the patient somehow recovered enough of his voice to say to the discomfited young lady, "I'm not sure what you're doing down there, miss, but please pay close attention, because I really need to know: Are my test results back?"

Graham

WINTER FESTIVALS pour nous qui sommes mécréants

Dr J. Kornblatt

Mair poses an interesting question. Although she did not phrase it this way, I have interpreted it as, "How does a good atheist celebrate the winter solstice?" Some years ago, maybe 60, it became apparent that one could not ignore the solstice. Today, you walk into a small non-Christian shop to buy a bit of bean paste and you are blasted with deck the halls Up at Jean-Talon market, the folks who sell olives and oils and hot pepper sauce spend the day listening to Xmas carols. No matter where you go, you are bombarded with "the spirit" (of commercialism?).

What does the good atheist do? He/she has options but ignoring is not one of them. Here's what I do: I accept that some of my brethren humans are not interested in the religious aspects of Xmas but are interested in buying presents and receiving presents. I accept that there are many who have religion and have a need to practice it in the most unobtrusive manner possible. Given the choice, I would prefer to sit down with a glass of something on Xmas eve with the latter group rather than with the former.

In reality, what pleases mj kornblatt and me is to go up on the mountain on the evening of the 24th of December, go skating on beaver pond if the ice is reasonable, go walking around the top of the mountain and then, thoroughly chilled, go back to the apartment where there is some young cheap wine in the barrel and a beautiful cipaille in the oven. When the two of us are lucky, there are others with whom the peace of

this moment can be shared. The wine and cipaille would be bitter were it not possible to share the spirit of the solstice. Giving to those who are not and cannot be around is the ultimate happiness of the moment. Who are those people. They are the ones who live in Haiti and our far north, the ones in Palestine and Kenya and Zimbabwe and the far east. Giving is what makes living worthwhile. The rest is icing on the cake, far too sweet and far too fattening.

Oops.... one last thing makes the evening of the 24th special: At 7:30 PM the late Al Maitland reads Frederick Forsyth's 'The Shepherd'. It wouldn't be *Xmas*, or whatever you want to call the day, without it."

This seems the right moment to include this very moving document.

A GREAT COMPANION by Stanley Morris

Three years ago we bought a small house in the country outside St-Sauveur, on a small lake. Real country, until last year the only houses we could see were across the lake. We bought it partly so that the family could spend time together. With 4 married children and 8 grandchildren it was sometimes too crowded, so we started an expansion in the fall.

We are used to country dogs visiting us. There have been regular separate visits by several large dogs. Eventually we met the owners.

An unexpected side effect of the expansion is that we assumed responsibility for 2 large dogs, a female German shepherd (62 lb) and a larger male Akita mix (80 lb), both probably 2 – 3 years old. One Saturday mid-October when we drove up to see house progress, the 2 dogs were there. We were only there for a few hours, but the dogs stayed the whole time. We assumed that they belonged to a neighbor. The contractor later told us that his men were giving them bits of their lunches. The next week the dogs were there when we came on Saturday. They looked hungry, so we gave them chicken burgers. They slept on the outside entrance all night, so apparently had no home to go to. Next morning I bought a big bag of dog food, they immediately responded when I took it out of the car. They came and rubbed their heads on the bag. They ate well (I knew to give them moderate amounts at intervals). I left instructions for the workers to feed them. One small dog I would have taken home (my 15-yr old miniature dachshund died a few months ago), 2 large dogs couldn't fit in my house. Our daughter Joanne sent e-mails with pictures to rescue organizations. All were full, as were the non-kill SPCA's. A wonderful woman near St-Sauveur, Ilene Geringer Smith, responded to the e-mails and put up posters around town, no response. She has a friend with a kennel with dog runs, she tried to take them there, but they ran away from her. We were going to do it together on that Saturday, but the pound came illegally and took the dogs away on the Friday. They wouldn't release them for a week, claiming they were looking for the owners. (Actually they have a store where they try to sell the dogs they pick up)

The 2 women did eventually free them, and we visited them on the weekend. Joanne wanted to take them to her home, we convinced her to wait. (She is a single mother with 2 dogs and 3 children).

The following week we did take them to Joanne's home as a temporary measure until a good permanent home could be found for them. They are such well-trained, obedient friendly dogs. For the first few days they waited for permission to come into the house, even if they had just gone into the back yard and the door was left open for them to come back in. In all this time we have heard them bark only once. A minor problem was that Joanne's dogs resented the newcomers. Walking 4 dogs requires skill, which Joanne has. I wish I had a picture of her walking the 4 dogs.



The large male dog (Duke) is really devoted to the female (Fancy), watches out for her. At first the dogs chose a basement room as their own. A few days later Duke decided they should instead sleep with the pack leader (Joanne) as is proper for dogs. However Fancy decided to go back to the basement room. What could Duke do? He guarded them both by sleeping on the ground floor, ready to run either upstairs to

Joanne, or downstairs to Fancy, as needed. Eventually all 4 dogs slept in her room, 2 smaller ones on the bed, and 2 large ones on the floor. The dogs are affectionate and extremely well behaved.

Fancy has a problem with her left rear leg. X-rays show a previous injury, and a mess that might be bone cancer or just old injury effect. If the latter, the surgeon says he can't do anything, but she isn't in much pain. She walks reasonably well on 4 legs but runs on 3 legs. We did a biopsy to see if it's cancer. The results were no, but the vet doesn't believe it. Time will tell.

We had thought that the 2 dogs were inseparable and that we would have to place them together. Gradually Joanne started to think that she could cope with all 4 dogs. Frankly, the newcomers are better behaved than her original pair. However Duke didn't act concerned during the few days that Fancy spent with the vet for the recovery from the biopsy, so separation is not a problem.

Last month something happened, probably predictable. Duke had apparently been chewing on a stuffed animal all day. In the afternoon Joanne's ex was there to replace the nanny, and tossed it to Belle (40 lb dog). She started playing with it and Duke attacked her, and drew blood. (Poor Belle seems to be unlucky with other dogs.)

Joanne rushed home, decided that she couldn't keep Duke, and brought him to my house. I was once again in charge of a dog. Walking a big dog is much more enjoyable than walking a small one. He is very affectionate, loves to have his tummy rubbed. We bonded immediately. Although a big dog, he is not clumsy, he moves easily through the house. When I'm eating he waits outside the kitchen door and watches me. (instead of coming in to wait for food). Unfortunately he is too big for my house. He needs a home with a big yard, and big rooms. Probably best not to be in a home with another pet. A country home would probably be the best.

With onset of winter we were unable to keep him at home and found a temporary home for him with a rescue organization run by Sophie Fournier. I was sorry to see him go and hope that a good home will be found for him. Sophie e-mailed me to say that "he is a very sweet dog...was great with the other dogs....will make someone a wonderful friend"

Please contact me if you (or someone you know) are interested in having a fine companion (and bodyguard). I can send some more pictures by e-mail. You can contact Sophie directly at SOPHIE@RIMASEC.net

Stan Morris 514-489-4703 stanPmorris@hotmail.com

Rafting on a River (2)
by Alex Sengbusch

The River "Neckar"

My practical maritime experience started innocently enough with an inner tube and a paddle. The river behind our house, the Neckar, with a smooth, slow flow that was just perfect for getting swept away by it's easy current while having enough time to observe the surroundings.



On the river banks with southern exposure there were vineyards, started and cultivated here by the Romans.

This was not a mere river, but a 367 km long waterway that was the border between the conquering Romans and the Germanic tribes.

The Romans hardly ventured north of that border and when they did like Varus, they lost most of their men during each excursion, which prompted the emperor Augustus to lament: "Varus, Varus, please return my legions! I'm not sure if he said 'please'.

The Neckar rises in the Black Forest and passes through the towns and cities like Rottweil, Stuttgart, Heidelberg and then joins up with the river Rhine. These cities, unbeknown to many, are true historical heavyweights.

Rottweil. A town located closest to the source of the river. This is the oldest town in southwestern Germany, founded in A.D. 73 by the Romans. The town's name was established around the year 700, when a church was build on the foundations of an old Roman bath house, the 'Villa'. Because of the numerous red tiles and bricks found at the site, it was called 'red villa' and known to the locals as Rottweil. The Romans had also brought with them a breed of working dogs that would help herd the food for their legions. The dogs stayed. This town gave them their name - the 'Rottweiler' dog.

Stuttgart. Here, the river meanders through the outskirts of the city, where I practiced the fine art of inner

tube-ing. In A.D. 950, this place started out as a stud farm for Duke Luidolf's horses and when it attained city status in 1300, it adopted the horse for the city's coat of arms. How ironic, when you realize that this is the cradle of the horseless carriage. Here, Karl Benz built the world's first practical automobile and Gottlieb Daimler with partner Wilhelm Maybach, were granted a patent in 1885 for the first modern gasoline engine. Some great cars have been built here since 1899, the Mercedes-Benz, and if that was not enough, the Porsche factory is just around the corner.

Heidelberg. Here, where the river leaves a narrow valley and soon reaches the river Rhine, is the city of Heidelberg. With its castle dating from 1155 on top of the hill, Heidelberg is one of those must see places. It's here that Elvis, during his tour of duty with the army recorded the song "Muss I denn". In the local dialect, no less. Another famous Heidelberg song was adopted by San Francisco ("I lost my heart in insert name of your city here"). And, consider this: In 1907, a 600,000 year old jaw-bone was found in this area. The earliest evidence of life in Europe. Little wonder there is one of the oldest universities, the Ruprecht Karls University founded in 1386, commonly known as University of Heidelberg. My great-great grandfather's oldest son Alexander studied law here in 1814, and the following year at the University of Goettingen, but got expelled for dueling during a feud between *Student Associations* (if you must know, the Ruthanians and the Euronians,). He finished his studies in St. Petersburg.

Amici e vini sono meglio vecchi
Proverbio italiano

Car vous lisez, n'est-ce-pas...

Françoise Ligier

Ne cherchez pas dans ces lignes les réflexions d'une professeure en retraite qui se prendrait pour une critique littéraire ... Ces lignes me sont inspirées par le plaisir que j'ai eu à lire certaines œuvres et par une vieille manie de professeure de vouloir partager ses bonnes découvertes.

Ma situation de retraitée me donne la liberté de lire ce que je veux, quand je veux, où je veux, et mon âge, que je peux dire grand, m'incite à vous dire ce que je sais être la sagesse: évitez les pharmacies et fréquentez les petites librairies de quartier qui existent encore.

Voici trois romans qui vous emmèneront du nord au sud, de l'est à l'ouest mais qui ont un point commun : l'intrigue a toujours comme toile de fond une page d'Histoire.

Un siècle de novembre

W.D. Wetherell

Traduit de l'anglais par Lori Saint-Martin et Paul Gagné

Les Allusifs

À l'automne 1918, Charles Marden qui, dans l'île de Vancouver, «jugeait les hommes et cultivait des pommes», est frappé par le destin: sa femme, Laura, meurt de la grippe espagnole et son fils est porté disparu «dans la mêlée des Flandres». Comment faire son deuil d'un être à qui on n'a pas assez dit son amour et dont la mort sans trace fait partie de ce que le monde entier voudrait pouvoir oublier. Seul, sans repère, il part : d'abord pour Vancouver où le conduit son dernier ami puis pour Halifax, l'Angleterre et enfin la région d'Ypres . Tout au cours de ce voyage, il rejoint le flot d'hommes et de femmes surtout qui, comme lui, vont «là-bas» parce qu'il faut faire quelque chose pour apaiser le tourment qui les habite, l'incompréhension du malheur qui veut les anéantir. Cette marée de pèlerins de la peine et de la douleur grossit, grossit, et prend possession des lieux de l'horreur, «de saillant d'Ypres». Sur ce qui fut champs de bataille, une foule en haillons, sale, crottée, hagarde et souvent affamée recherche une parcelle d'humanité ou de rationalité. Les mots victoire, bravoure, honneur, patrie, s'effritent, se dissolvent et font place aux gestes inspirés par la survie dans une guerre où le combattant comprend trop souvent qu'il est un pion dans une partie dont les enjeux lui échappent.

Dans cette Flandre où les villes sont rayées de la carte, où la terre éventrée n'est que ferraille, arbres calcinés et débris impossibles à identifier, où on entend des successions de détonations d'obus abandonnés,

une femme frêle fait son chemin à travers tranchées et barbelés. C'est la rencontre de Charles et de cette jeune femme qui font de ce livre «un hymne animal à la vie».

L'auteur de ce livre d'une beauté terrifiante vit aujourd'hui dans le New-Hampshire. A **Century of November** a été publié aux États-Unis par les Presses de l'Université du Michigan en 2004 et en édition de poche en 2005.

Je vais chercher à lire les autres romans de cet auteur et en particulier **Morning** et **Chekhov'Sister**. Il y a sûrement quelqu'un parmi vous qui connaît ces titres... Alors, dois-je investir dans un achat ou... ?

Le dernier frère

Nathacha Appanah
Éditions de l'Olivier

«Pourquoi eux, pourquoi lui et pas moi?» «Pourquoi eux, pourquoi lui et pas toi?»

Un vieil homme, Raj, au soir de sa vie, se sent coupable d'être encore vivant. Il revoit son enfance, somme toute heureuse, dans la plantation entre son père alcoolique et violent, sa mère énergique et aimante et ses deux frères qu'il adore. Raj seul va à l'école parce qu'il est le plus chétif. «Pourquoi moi et pas eux?» pense-t-il déjà.

Un jour, une violente crue emporte ses deux frères. «Pourquoi eux et pas moi» se demande à nouveau Raj? «Pourquoi eux et pas toi?» lui dit son père.

La famille déménage loin et s'installe en bordure d'une forêt à la végétation tropicale. Le père est alors gardien dans une prison. La curiosité pousse Raj à découvrir qui sont les MÉCHANTS qui y sont enfermés. L'enfant de dix ans comprend mal que le petit garçon triste aux boucles blondes qu'il entrevoit derrière des barbelés puisse être dangereux. En fait, David fait partie des 1500 Juifs d'Europe centrale embarqués sur l'Atlantique en 1940 puis refoulés de Palestine par le British Foreign Office avant d'être internés jusqu'en 1945 à l'île Maurice alors colonie britannique.

Raj veut vivre avec son ami. Un cyclone permettra aux deux enfants de partir dans cette forêt que connaît si bien Raj. Ils vont, pour de courts instants, retrouver la naïveté, les jeux, le rire, la complicité des enfants de leur âge dont les drames de l'humanité les ont privés. Ils vont souder leur amitié qu'un nouveau drame brisera. Raj à nouveau se posera cette question : «pourquoi lui et pas moi?».

Nathacha Appanah décrit avec bonheur le pays où elle est née. Elle réussit à nous faire partager la beauté sensuelle des paysages, des forêts, des cours d'eau. Elle réussit à nous faire sentir les odeurs et respirer les parfums. Elle réussit à nous faire vivre la brutalité et la majesté d'une nature qui dans ce roman est plus qu'une toile de fond. Elle réussit, grâce à la maîtrise d'une écriture sobre et limpide à nous faire entrer avec retenue et dignité dans la fragilité de destins marqués par le poids de l'Histoire.

Cette histoire poignante s'est installée pour longtemps dans ma tête et dans mon cœur.

Waltenberg

Hédi Kaddour
Folio 4511

Pour le bien de l'humanité cet auteur devrait avoir droit à une deuxième vie (s'il le veut bien...), le temps de nous écrire plusieurs romans comme **Waltenberg**, premier roman de 700 pages qu'il vient de publier à l'âge où habituellement on prend sa retraite.

«Un homme rêve de retrouver une femme qu'il a aimée. Un maître espion est à la recherche d'une taupe. Leurs chemins se croisent. Cela s'est passé au XXème siècle». Voilà le résumé d'un vendeur sur internet.

Ce livre, qui contient un siècle de l'Histoire du monde occidental, puisqu'il commence dans les tranchées de la première «grande guerre» pour finir après la chute du mur de Berlin, est un magnifique roman, «porté par un souffle poétique puissant» dit son éditeur, où des personnages réels ou fictifs vivent leurs destins individuels avec passion et humour, où l'intrigue est savamment tissée à la manière des meilleurs polars.

J'avais mis ce livre dans ma valise pour partir sur une île presque déserte de la Méditerranée. Les trente premières pages lues dans une salle d'attente d'un aéroport m'ont paru touffues et trop denses : j'ai donc abandonné ma lecture. Mais j'étais accrochée... par les personnages, je crois, leurs ambitions démesurées, leurs sens de la dérision, leur audace, leur courage, leur intelligence, leur culture et leur naïveté aussi. Après les premières pages ils deviendront humains dans leurs histoires d'amour et d'amitié mais garderont la «classe» des grands héros romanesques jusque dans la façon dont chacun va sortir de scène en regardant la

jeune relève d'un œil intéressé. Le lendemain et les jours suivants, contrairement à mes habitudes, j'ai loué un transat et un parasol sur la plage et j'ai dévoré ce «pavé» à toute allure. Puis, parce que l'auteur mêle avec ironie le réel et le fictif, j'ai relu des passages, j'ai vérifié certains faits dits historiques avant de m'immerger à nouveau dans ce roman pour le seul plaisir de savourer sans en analyser les ingrédients un des plus grands romans de cette décennie.

Waltenberg est le premier roman d'Hédi Kaddour qui est professeur de littérature française et de dramaturgie à l'École normale supérieure de Lyon. Il est aussi poète, critique littéraire, traducteur d'anglais et d'allemand.

Alors, retraités du monde entier (ceux et celles de Concordia en particulier) à vos claviers ou à vos plumes! Pour nous montrer qu'Hédi Kaddour n'est pas le seul.... ou pour nous faire partager vos plaisirs de lire.... Car vous lisez, n'est-ce- pas!!

No Good Deed.....

Dr Jane Gellert

I called my esteemed colleague and best friend to say I had a 40% discount coupon for Borders Bookstore and was there a book she would like me to buy for her before the coupon expired. "Well, now that you've offered, see if you can't pick up a Complete Works of Shakespeare-OUP." "Pas de problème", I replied, thinking that this would be a slam dunk and a ten minute jaunt at my nearest friendly Border's store.

Off I went, snow storm not dissuading this intrepid traveler. Arriving at the store, I quickly found a computer terminal and typed in my request. Hmm—nothing but used copies from OUP or Modern Library. Quick call on my cell to esteemed colleague and good friend to report my findings. Well, used might be ok, depending upon the condition. Sorry, can't see the book, only available as an online order. Well, try to find another book. OK.

Off to check the shelves again. Good grief why is everything on the top shelf, where I, a mere five feet, can't see a thing. Tap, tap. Excuse me, nice young helpful store clerk. Could you help me find a copy of **The Complete Works of Shakespeare-OUP**. Let's check the computer. Done that! Says you only have used copies, but I was hoping that was a mistake. Is this a gift or for yourself? It's for my best friend. Oh, what does she do. Teaches French literature. Why does she want a book of Shakespeare, it's in English. Can't she read it in French? Yes, well, she's an academic and English is her first language and given the opportunity she likes to read works in their original language. Oh-well, why does it have to be Oxford University Press? Listen, this a very well known author and a representative of the Canadian government to conferences in China, and besides she's an academic and you know how they are! So, I guess if she asks you for a specific publisher, you have to do what she says. Right! Ok, says helpful 6'2" very young and getting younger by the minute store clerk. Let's check the shelves. Thank God for small mercies. Here, I think this is it. (Top shelf, misshelved). Forty-five minutes and three long distance cell phone calls later, I am out in the parking lot, shoveling the snow from my car having successfully redeemed my 40% off coupon and educated the young in the ways of university academics. Although he was still looking quite bemused as I left the store. What was that other saying...never volunteer!

Speaking of Gellert!

One of the best-known Welsh legends is that of Prince Llewelyn and his dog Gelert.

Prince Llywelyn of Gwynedd's favourite dog is Gelert, a fearless hunting dog and loyal friend and companion who was said to have been a gift from King John of England. Llywelyn leaves his baby son with a nurse and a servant while he embarks on a hunting trip with his wife. The nurse and the servant go for a walk in the mountains leaving the baby alone and unprotected. After a while Llywelyn notices that Gelert isn't with the hunting pack. Reasoning that the only place Gelert would go is back to the lodge, he calls off the hunt and heads back home. As the party is dismounting, Gelert comes running out of the lodge towards his master, covered in blood and wagging his tail. The princess, calling her child's name, faints. Llewelyn rushes in to find the cradle overturned, the bloodstained bedclothes thrown all over the floor, and no sign of his son. Filled with anger and grief he draws his sword against the dog. As Gelert dies, he whimpers and his cries are answered by the sound of a baby crying from behind the overturned cradle. Llewelyn pulls aside the cradle to find his son unharmed and the bloody body of a huge wolf next to him. Gelert had killed the wolf as it tried to attack Llewelyn's son. From that day onwards Llewelyn never speaks again. Filled with remorse, he buries Gelert in a meadow nearby and marks the grave with a cairn of stones, though he could still hear its dying cries. The village of Beddgelert (Gelert's Grave) in North-West Wales is said to owe its name to this legend.

Thank you, Michael di Grappa

Dr Brian Slack,

On December 13 2007, the University held its undergraduate awards ceremony. Hosted by the new acting President, Michael di Grappa, it represented a departure from previous formats. This time the donors and the award donors of the awards bein given the opportunity to be on stage with the undergraduate awards recipients. As one of the participants in whose name a prize in Urban

Studies was presented, I felt proud to be recognized in this way, and was genuinely pleased to see how many students are being helped by the generosity of a large number of donors. I hope this event is an indication that the acting President will encourage further openness in university community events.

Nous vous remercions, Monsieur le Président

Brian Slack

Le 13 décembre dernier a eu lieu la cérémonie annuelle durant laquelle l'Université distribue les prix et boures aux étudiants de premier cycle. Pour accueillir donateurs et récipiendaires, le nouveau recteur intérimaire, Michael di Grappa a innové cette fois-ci. Les nouveaux donateurs ont eu droit à une reconnaissance spéciale puis donateurs, récents ou anciens, et étudiants sont montés sur l'estrade ensemble, ce qui était fort agréable. L'un des prix en Études urbaines portant mon nom, j'ai été très fier d'être ainsi reconnu; j'ai été aussi très heureux de constater le nombre important d'étudiants à qui la générosité des donateurs profite. J'espère que ce nouveau format indique que notre Recteur intérimaire continuera d'encourager la transparence dans les futurs événements universitaires.

The Young Man and the Sea

by Alex Sengbusch

I know what you are thinking , but this is not about fishing. I am a sailor. In fact, I got my sea legs as an OS (Ordinary Seaman) during those summers when I was still a teenager in high school and I've never looked back.

There was no summer vacation for me, I went to sea. My first trip was on a freighter destined for Finland to load wood for paper production. I signed on in Luebeck, an ancient Hanseatic city, that created it's wealth by trading with the Scandinavian countries.

This was a huge ship, shown below, an old and rusty freighter (see footnote*) that needed a coat of paint – my summer job?

The good news, I had connections and my job was to help the Stewart keep inventory and hand out beer and cigarettes to the crew, on account, to be deducted from their pay – and, unbeknown to me at the time I was groomed for my next assignment, I spend a lot of time on the bridge and learned about the charts and plotting a course, but the best part was to get my turn at the wheel and hold a steady course...not an easy task with a ship that size.



But don't get me wrong, I paid my dues, I did night guard duty while peeling potatoes, just as the rest of the crew.

On day two, we were so far out to sea, you could not see land on the horizon, just the seascape, while whitecaps and swells were getting bigger and bigger. The ship was more or less empty, we had loaded just a few thousand machine parts for Finland, so we were high in the water and the ship started a perpetual motion like a slow motion swing. No problem for me – never got seasick – the key is to stay at the pivot point, where the movement is at a minimum.

his went on for a few days, when I noticed the nights were getting brighter – we played cards on deck at midnight without light. We were approaching Finland. Flat lands and forests everywhere. We entered a bay and got escorted by a pilot boat to our anchoring spot. The bay was full of wooden logs the size of fence posts – they were floating all around and we ploughed right through the middle. Finally we came to a halt and set anchor.

A few small boats appeared to round up the logs. Several floating platforms were tied up against our hull and workers with huge iron hooks reeled in each log and piled them into a rope loop. When the piles were 3 feet high, the ship cranes lifted them on board and lowered them into the holding areas and when those were full, they were stacked on deck.

The loading lasted for several days and the ship sank lower and lower into the water. As soon as we were fully loaded with logs, we lifted anchor and headed the North Sea and the city of Calais.

This time the deck was much closer to the sea and once we started pitching and rolling it would not end until we got into the calm waters of the harbor.

A Secret Mission at Sea

Another summer and another ship, but this time it was no ordinary mission. This time it was a secret mission to scan the bottom of the sea. This ship was trolling at low speeds and recorded the shape of the seabed. This was done with an echo sounder. The echo was recorded on paper, in peaks and valleys, like a seismograph.

Any significant shape was analyzed and when it looked like an object this mission was all about, we anchored and a diver would go down and take a look. Not with scuba gear like Jacques Cousteau, but in a divers suit, copper helmet, lines for safety and breathing tubes.



I was offered a shot of underwater exploration, but declined. The water was just too dark and uninviting.

But, at that time I had learned enough to navigate, plot a course and record all coordinates where we found significant peaks based on the echo sound recorder. We systematically charted the waters in the tri-angle between Denmark, Sweden and Germany looking for the object of this officially classified mission. Would we be successful in our quest? What were we looking for? What did we find?

To be continued...

For answers to these questions and more – please read the next edition of the newsletter – look for the story on “Hunting for U-Boats” and “Shore leave in Hamburg”, where I hooked up with four lads from Liverpool, John, Paul, George and Ringo. I wonder whatever became of them?

ii * Excerpt from “Notices to Mariners”

SEEVOGEL, Georg Freymann; 1924; Helsingors Jernskib & Maskin.; 1,404 tons; 249-5x38- 1x16-9; triple-expansion engines. The German steamship *Seevogel*, on a voyage from Karlsvik to Amsterdam, ran aground off North Oland on December 6th, 1959.

The ship got off and continued her voyage but the next day a sévère gale developed and she was driven ashore near Brano, broke in two and sank.

Author's note: I did not do it – I had disembarked in September.

ALASKA ALASKA ALASKA ALASKA

L'Alaska est situé à l'extrême nord-ouest du Canada, près de l'océan Pacifique. Au point de vue superficie, l'Alaska est certainement le plus grand État des États-Unis (avec 1,5 million de km², soit trois fois la France). La capitale est **Juneau**, du nom d'un prospecteur québécois originaire de L'Assomption (quelque 45 km de Montréal) du nom de *Joseph Juneau*. Quant à la ville d'**Anchorage**, elle doit son nom au mot français «ancrage». Quant au mot Alaska, il proviendrait du mot aléoutien *Alyeska* et signifierait «grande terre» ou «terre vers laquelle la mer se jette.».

Au plan démographique, l'Alaska demeure un tout petit État — le 48e — avec seulement 626 932 habitants lors du recensement de 2000. De cet ensemble, 85,7 % de la population parle l'anglais comme langue maternelle. En fait, ceux qui n' parlent pas l'anglais correspondent pour l'essentiel aux Amérindiens et Inuits de l'Alaska, même si l'espagnol et le tagalog sont parlés par une partie de la population. On dénombre actuellement une vingtaine de langues autochtones appartenant aux familles eskimo-aléoute, pénutienne et na-déné. Seuls le yup'ik central, le yupik sibérien et l'inupiak atteignent les 1000 locuteurs ou plus. Plusieurs langues sont en voie d'extinction, notamment l'eyak, le hán, le bas-tanana, le haida, le holikachuk, le tanacross, etc.

On estime qu'en 2055 seulement cinq langues pourraient avoir survécu. Quoi qu'il en soit, le cas de l'Alaska est intéressant à plus d'un titre, mais c'est surtout en raison du fait autochtone que cet État du Nord mérite qu'on s'y intéresse.

Tout cela ne traduit pas évidemment le plaisir que nous avons connu un certain juillet dans un «hot tub» à 10 heures du soir, entourées du bruit des oiseaux et de rares éclats de rire, avec une température de 28°C sans humidité aucune, le soleil chaud encore directement au-dessus de nos têtes, de belles plantes et des montagnes magnifiques à perte de vue... Nous avons toutes les trois, moi et mes deux filles, failli demander nos cartes vertes pour les États-Unis !

The view in the first photo below was not exactly what we'd been expecting: a strange picture of the true north, it seemed to us, but after a few days, we could see that it might come in useful! More seriously, let me say the visit to Alaska was absolutely mind blowing. Of course, we enjoyed the coastline, the craggy outline of the mountains and glaciers, the occasional signs of human life, the lively waters and all the otters, whales, etc., doing their best to hide from us. We were all competing to see the mostest! The ship was delightful. It has now been bought up by another company so who's to know if the service is still so perfect.

But although the coastline was a sight to behold, it is the inland journey that captivated us, short though it was. We all three felt as if we were in a different space, not only literally, but also metaphorically. It was as if we had crossed a bridge into a different reality. An enchantment. First of all, although we crossed through what must have been the most heavily inhabited areas, human beings were few and far between. Many of those we saw or who spend their summers there tend to be transient Alaska dwellers, leaving what appears to be a temporary footprint, although the homes, boats and seaplanes that characterize what for want of a better word one must call the built-up areas are real enough and produce their own pollution. But you know they'll leave and that nature will begin its annual restoration. The distances were overwhelming; the expression «as far as the eye could see» has a very special significance when you are in Alaska. The growth is amazing in spite of a certain number of dry areas. When the sun shines all day long and half the night, the plants are quick to absorb it all; one is then surrounded by the biggest most beautiful fruits and vegetables one could possibly imagine. And you must go there to see them as the Alaskans export none of their produce. The season is too short and they must stock up for the very long winter; every apple, every potato is precious. All is not perfect; we know the oil and gas companies are more concerned with profit than with beauty but, confronted by the depth, size and beauty of the Alaskan lands, it is difficult to believe that they will overcome. Here, on the contrary, it is possible to believe that oil and gas and all they represent can be defeated. This is still Nature untamed. Certainly here we see that the Native Americans (both Amerindians and Eskimos) know the land belongs to them. It's hard for me to explain, because clearly many live in poverty in rundown communities; many others, however, have successful careers in American cities, often in executive positions, but returning in the summer to avoid losing themselves and their family contacts. In all cases, their life seemed to us to be permeated with pride. Part of the enchantment we experienced came from chance encounters with wildlife. On the whole we were careful to greet the various mammoths, elks, etc., through strong wire fencing, but late night dining on a terrace in Anchorage inevitably leads to hailing a moose as it wanders through the city, while desperately hoping it's not a female with a baby in tow...

One can't do justice to such a journey in a short space. And I wish I had saved more time to write it up properly. But if you have not yet experienced the inland beauty, then I do encourage you to pack your bag and take off. In the summer!!!

Mair

