

CUPARUC

newsletter of the concordia university pensioners' association

bulletin de l'association des retraité-e-s de l'université Concordia



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RESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The time has come for me to step down from the presidency. I have been President of CUPA for the last seven years (one year beyond the limit set out in our Constitution) and it is time for someone else with new ideas and drive to take over. There is no particular issue behind my decision but the realization that I have served long enough. The details of the nomination process for a successor are included elsewhere in this issue and on cupa.concordia.ca.

As to other matters, the proposed changes to the Benefit program have been out on hold due to the upheaval in the University President's office and related governance issues. We are still very much on alert to the potential changes that could be negative to us. As to the Pension Plan, the recovery still continues and all looks good.

Our social program is going on very well thanks to Geoff Adams and his committee. Regrettably this issue will be too late for two spring events but there is still the walking tour of St. Henri on April 27. Unfortunately Geoff only took the job for a year and so we will be looking for a replacement.

It is with regret that we have to recommend to the AGM an increase in dues to \$25 with effect from June 2011. Our legal costs have hit our budget hard and our bank balance is low.

Please check cupa.concordia.ca periodically and send us your up-to-date e-mail address if you've changed it so we can maintain contact. If you know of any retirees who may not be members of the Association, please encourage them to join. Politically numbers count!

Thanks to all of you who have helped me over the past years. It has been a privilege to serve all of you.

Graham Martin



Message du Président

Il est venu le moment pour moi de démissionner de mon rôle de Président de l'Association. Ça fait sept ans que j'occupe la présidence (un an de plus que stipulé dans notre Constitution). Il s'avère donc une bonne occasion pour un autre ou une autre avec de nouvelles idées et de l'enthousiasme à prendre la relève. Je n'ai pas de raison particulière pour cette décision. Je me rends seulement compte que j'ai été président assez longtemps. Les détails concernant le processus pour nommer un nouveau président paraissent plus loin dans ce bulletin et vous pouvez les consulter à cupa.concordia.ca.

En ce qui concerne les événements courants, les modifications aux avantages sociaux furent suspendues à cause du remue-ménage au cabinet du Président et d'autres problèmes de gouvernance. Votre Association est toujours vigilante en ce qui concerne les modifications éventuelles qui pourraient nuire à notre régime d'avantages sociaux. Le régime de retraite cependant, continue à bien se comporter.

Le programme social se porte très bien grâce à Geoff Adams et son équipe. Hélas ce numéro de CUPARUC vous arrivera trop tard pour deux événements printaniers. N'oubliez pas la randonnée pédestre de St Henri le 27 avril. Malheureusement, Geoff n'a consenti de faire ce boulot que pour un an; nous sommes donc à la recherche d'un bénévole pour le remplacer.

Les frais légaux ont fait mal à notre compte de banque. C'est donc avec regret que nous devons recommander à l'Assemblée Générale une hausse à 25.00\$ de nos cotisations à compter de juin 2011.

Veillez vérifier de façon périodique le site cupa,Concordia.ca et tenez nous au courant de votre adresse courriel afin que nous puissions vous rejoindre. Si vous connaissez des retraités qui ne sont pas membres de l'Association, encouragez les de se joindre à nous. Le plus qu'on est nombreux, le plus de poids politique que nous possédons.

Je remercie tous ceux qui m'ont soutenu pendant mon mandat de Président. Il fut un privilège de travailler à votre service.

Graham Martin

NOMINATIONS

A nominating committee to search for a new President (and some other positions on the Board) will be established. Should you be interested, or know someone else who would make a good President, (or serve in any other position) please let us know with a brief biography or case supporting your suggestion. Please send it to the address below or to me at grahammartin@sympatico.ca or call 514-697-1838. To help your deliberations I have attached a brief outline of what I see as the role of the President. The committee will recommend one or more candidates to the AGM on April 28.

If you wish to bypass the Nominating Committee and go directly to the members, feel free to do so. Again, please submit your name and those of a couple of other members who would support you. Obviously the background document is very important in this case, as your name will be submitted as a nomination from the floor.



The decision will be taken at the AGM unless the members present decide to use some other procedure. I would like to have made this a matter for the whole membership rather than just those attending the AGM but that would involve an expensive mail voting process and, unless the AGM feels it is justified, we will not do it.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONCORDIA PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION

To ensure the Association represents and promotes the interest of all pensioners and retirees of Concordia University. To this end the President will, through delegation and with the support of an executive committee, provide leadership and be responsible:

1. To ensure pensioners' interests in the Pension and Benefits Plans of the University are protected, maintained and improved including taking legal steps if required.
2. To see the Association operate in a prudent financial manner at the lowest reasonable cost to pensioners
3. To hold on a regular basis at least two general meetings (one of which will be the Annual General Meeting of the Association) per year and supplementary meetings if required.
4. To provide suitable communication between the Association and its members by the provision of a newsletter at least three times a year supplemented by other mailings as required.
5. To encourage social interaction between pensioners through various social activities.
6. To oversee the administration of the Pensioners Scholarship fund
7. To maintain a database of its members and a web site for its members information
8. To deal with individual problems of the members to the extent possible through referral to appropriate bodies.
9. To encourage all pensioners to join and maintain their membership in the Association
10. To maintain links with other University Pensioner Associations as necessary.
11. To do any other things that may be necessary to ensure the continued functioning and survival of the Association

Bilingualism is desirable but not essential. Some activities (i.e. Board of Governor's meetings, our general meetings, etc.) require presence in Montreal and unfortunately we currently cannot afford travel expenses.



ANADA: A NATION OF DIFFERENCES: ALL OF THEM THE SAME

Graeme Decarie

Living in New Brunswick is much like living in Ontario – or California or New York. Notably, politics, business, news media and universities in all these places are much alike. The major difference is that New Brunswick is small (pop. about three-quarters of a million). Power is played by a small cast on a small stage, so it's easier to see what is happening.

The province is effectively owned by a few, extremely wealthy families. The leading family is the Irvings, the largest employers in the province. They also own all the English dailies in the province – and it shows. Even by the journalistic standards of Fox News, the papers down here are appalling.

Only two parties have a chance of winning an election, the Liberals and Conservatives. They're the only ones subsidized by big money. In the recent provincial election, neither party had anything that could be called a platform. The winner for the Conservative leader who had nothing to say was that he promised to “listen to people”. His Minister of Finance is a former executive of the Irving interests.

The neo-conservative world of “think-tanks” is represented by the Atlantic Institute for Studies in Marketing (an Irving was until his recent death president of it). It has enormous influence in all news media. One of its prime targets is education, both public schools and universities.

The interest in education comes from a desire to kill public education, beginning with education principles that have become common in the US – modeling education on business methods featuring standardized tests and public ranking of schools a la MacLean's. The longer term objective is to privatize as much as possible of public education. The Atlantic Institute already controls the standardized testing – thus effectively controlling both curriculum and teaching.

The system has already proven a disaster in the US as that country has dropped into the educational toilet of the developed world. But ideology rules down here, The Moncton Times has written the most unethical and vitriolic editorials I have ever seen, spilling its venom over the teachers and the schools. (In fact, the public schools here are quite good – or they were- by any standard.)

I have a blog, almost daily, on the subject of journalistic ethics and public affairs down here with frequent reference to those editorials. You can find it by googling graeme decarie moncton. The site of the blog will appear on the first page.

I know that most of the deans of education in the region are alarmed at these attacks on public education. They know the motives, and they know the damage that is being done. But they have not said a word. There's a village fear of power and open discussion that pervades the whole society, right down to Home and School.

When the big families of New Brunswick held an “economic summit” to spread neo-conservative views, most of the invited were corporate executives. However, university presidents were invited, too. The presidents scampered as fast as their little feet could go to attend. They were wonderful window dressing but, so far as I have been able to learn, pretty much kept their mouths shut. They knew why they had been invited.

Now that I think of it, have Canadian universities in general have scampered to kiss up to the farcical ratings of MacLean's? McGill, in particular, springs to mind. Integrity is pretty scarce anywhere.

After the “summit”, Irving made a rare, public statement. He wrote an op-ed column for The Moncton Times and Tribune stating that he and the other economic summitters had decided to form a coalition with the government. Interestingly, the premier (who seems not to have requested such a move) made no public statement in response.

More interestingly, not a single academic political scientist said a word about this anti-democracy act of corporatism. But we have to take into account the increasing stuffing of universities with political scientists and economists who are missionaries for neo-conservatism. It reminds me of my shock when I chaired a conference of MBA professors with leading economists – and realized it was all about ideologizing them. (It was sponsored by Queen's MBA programme.)


So, when people ask me what it's like to live in New Brunswick, I say it's much like Ontario – or California or New York.. The only difference is that the decay of North American democracy, the power of greed, and the failure of academics to play any useful role shows up more clearly here.

So, how are things at Concordia?

Dumpster seen in Ottawa - Only Quebecers will understand



ET POURTANT!

AlexS. 

C'est plus que des chansons que Charles Aznavour nous a donné. Enfin pour moi ses chansons étaient toujours plus que cela, beaucoup plus. Pour moi c'était des attitudes, des tranches de la vie, parfois avec 'cruelle froideur' d'autres fois avec des 'élans de joie'. Comme par exemple la chanson qui suit :

« Un bon matin je sais que je m'éveillerai, différemment de tous les autres jours

Et mon cœur délivré enfin de notre amour, et pourtant, et pourtant

Sans un remords, sans un regret, je partirai droit devant moi, sans espoir de retour

et pourtant, et pourtant

Je marcherai vers d'autres cieux d'autres pays... »

Alors, aujourd'hui, c'est ça, c'est un de ces bon matins et je me suis éveiller différemment des autres jours. Et je dois l'avouer, c'est ne pas la première fois que ça m'arrive. Ca m'arrive de temps en temps et ça change tous, et c'est toujours profond, si je l'ose dire.

C'est comme ça aujourd'hui, j'ai décidé d'écrire en français. Ne cherchez pas plus loin, il n'y a pas d'autres raisons. Sauf peut être, un simple détail. Je faisais un sondage, mentalement, des essayes écrit en français dans ce bulletin de CUPA, devant vous. Et, quelle horreur, je me suis rendu compte que pour les francophones il n'y avait pas grand-chose à lire, je veux dire en quantité, pas en qualité.

Cela dit, au retour aux lyriques de la chanson d'Aznavour 'Et Pourtant'. Cette chanson était toujours une de mes favorites, mais pas à cause de l'amour donc il parlait

« Loin de tes yeux, loin du cœur, j'oublierai pour toujours, et ton corps, et tes bras, et ta voix, mon amour »

Enfin pour moi, les paroles qui me fascinaient toujours étaient la part ou il parlait de partir vers d'autres cieux, d'autres pays :

« Sans un remords, sans un regret, je partirai droit devant moi, sans espoir de retour »

Alors, c'est ça ! C'est moi qui est parti sans remord, sans regret, sans espoir de retour. Et pour moi, ça m'est arrive plusieurs fois. Partir d'un pays ou d'un lieu pour un autre, je ne sais pas ce qui me pousse, mais c'est comme ça, il faut que je voyage.

« J'arracherai sans une larme, sans un cri

Les liens secrets qui déchirent ma peau

Me libérant de toi pour trouver le repos »

A ce point je dois dire, que pour moi c'était pas exactement pour trouver le repos, mais pour trouver mon propre bonheur, selon mes idéals. Mais hélas, j'ai cherché près et loin, je dois avouer que je n'ai pas encore trouvé le lieu ou le moment ou je pourrais dire : 'ça y est', comme Faust devant Méfisto, mais moi je n'ai pas fait un pacte avec qui que se Alors suis-je néanmoins condamné à chercher éternellement jusqu' à la fin du monde ?

« il faudra bien que je retrouve ma raison

Mon insouciance et mes élans de joie

Que je parte à jamais pour échapper à toi

Dans d'autres bras, quand j'oublierai jusqu'à ton nom.

Quand je pourrai repenser l'avenir

Tu deviendras pour moi un lointain souvenir

Quand mon mal et ma peur, et mes pleurs, vont finir. »

Voilà, mes remerciement à Aznavour qui a put mettre les paroles à des circonstances dans lesquels je me suis trouvé de temps a l'autre. Difficile à comprendre pour ceux qui ne se sont jamais déplacé. Mais rien de spécial pour nous, permanents voyageurs, citoyens du monde.

Heureusement pour moi, la France, n'est pas devenue 'un lointain souvenir', malgré mon départ il y a longtemps, je l'aime toujours !



Bandol, France, près de Marseille



HE BOOK OF NEGROES

Lawrence Hill

Towards the end of February, I was invited by the bookstore Olivieri on Côte des Neiges to animate an interview with the Canadian writer Lawrence Hill on the occasion of the publication of the French translation of his celebrated novel *The Book of Negroes*. I skipped through the French version (an excellent translation) in order to refresh my memory and was very excited at the thought of meeting the author. The event was certainly very well attended, particularly by francophones who had been waiting impatiently to have access to a version they could read.

Many of you will not only remember that this novel won the Canada Reads Award in 2009, you may also have chosen to read it, with enjoyment, I hope. If you bought it or borrowed it from a friend or the local library in Canada, you are lucky, as I will explain. If, on the other hand, you have never cracked a page, now is the time to start for both men and women. The two genders were certainly equally distributed chez Olivieri.

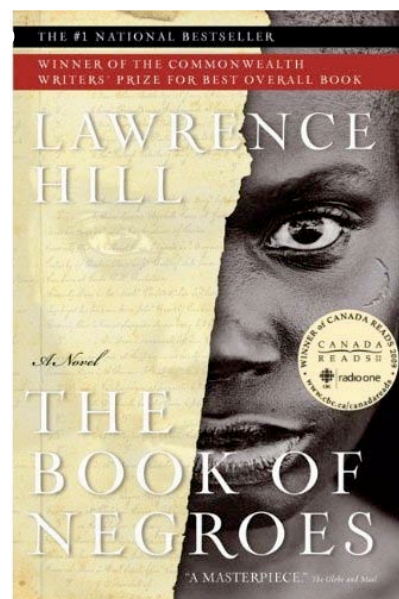
The Canadian title of the book refers to a real document with that name which exists in two versions, plus copies, naturally. The original British version is held in the UK National Archives in Kew, London. The American version of the *Book of Negroes* is held by the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC.

The document contains valuable records on 3000 African Americans who chose to support the British during the beginning of the American Revolution. The former slaves recorded in the *Book of Negroes* were evacuated to colonies in British North America, where many of them settled, particularly in Nova Scotia. Others moved on, via the auspices of the Sierra Leone Company, to Sierra Leone, where they formed the original settlers of Freetown and founded the Krio people.

Although the title refers to a genuine historical document, publishers in the States found it distasteful and non-politically correct and issued it under the bland title: *Someone knows my name* which is only important if you have actually read the relevant paragraph in the novel. Other English-speaking countries followed suit. That

made Hill's novel less enticing and affected the sales somewhat. His own Brooklyn U.S cousins complained bitterly about this change.

Fortunately, the change imposed by puritanical publishers elsewhere had no impact on the quality of the novel itself. For those already in the know (and I was not one of them), the title indicates roughly the time when the action took place. Hill invents a young West African girl, aged 11, a proud Muslim, who is kidnapped into slavery after seeing her parents murdered. Her name is Aminata, although it goes through a variety of changes in slavery. The novel opens early in the 19th century when we meet her in London, England, as an old lady who is recruited to help those who wish to make slavery illegal.



How did she get there? What made this child into such a survivor? We follow her as she walks with others to the coast, a very long journey which involves much suffering and many deaths. Through her we come to learn and experience the horrors of slavery, the loss of identity, of humanity, of culture, of autonomy,

of love, of her own children. There are also, of course, some few good moments. Her first years in the new land were spent on the sea islands of South Carolina where she became literate and developed her skill as a midwife but fate and her various «owners» took her to many different areas of the States like a piece of luggage. We last see her on American soil in New York during the American Revolution; she is evacuated to Canada and, in the novel, is seen helping to fill out *The Book of Negroes*. Her adventures are not over. The difficulties met in Nova Scotia encourage her to leave for Sierra Leone, to attempt to return to her own village, etc. She survives it all.

Such is not the case of many of her friends nor indeed of her husband, father of the sole surviving child. Through Aminata, however, we can see how the different clusters or groups of Black slaves organized their private or so-

cial lives on this foreign soil. Interestingly enough, mainly for those who have also read *Moi, Tituba sorcière* by Maryse Condé, where a similar situation exists, the only owner who actually shows some respect for Aminata's intelligence and who finally frees her is Jewish.

The adventures she and those about her undergo are phenomenal. They keep the reader constantly fascinated and teach us more about the history of Blacks and of slavery in Canada than pupils ever meet in the classroom. Read it once, read it twice, keep learning!

The title of the French translation is *Aminata*. We know then that *Aminata* must be the main character in the novel. Again, however, I feel that the title is somewhat unsatisfactory, although it may well seduce Muslim or African readers for different reasons. This is a lovely name, which Lawrence Hill had already given to his daughter. It means *Loyalty* in Arabic and is quite common in West Africa, the equivalent perhaps of *Mary* in

the English-speaking world or *Mair* or *Marie*. Many famous writers have *Aminata* as a first name; one thinks in particular of *Aminata Sow Fall* in Senegal. And, most important of all, it is apparently the name of the mother of the prophet Mohammed.

Lawrence Hill has already published several books. He was born in Canada to a Black father and a White mother who immigrated to Canada from the States the day after their wedding. I have always assumed that their decision was motivated by racist laws in the US. that forbade «interracial» marriages. I will check that impression by reading *Black Berry*; *Sweet Juice*. What I do know is that his parents and I, without knowing each other, attended some of the same rallies in Toronto in the early 1960's. The world was already small...

Mair Verthuy

Distinguished Professor Emerita



RÔLE DU PRÉSIDENT OU DE

LA PRÉSIDENTE DE L'ASSOCIATION

S'assurer que l'Association représente et promouvait les intérêts de tous les retraités de l'université Concordia. Afin d'atteindre ce but, le Président, avec le soutien des membres du comité exécutif fera preuve de leadership et sera responsable:

- 1 – d'assurer que les intérêts des retraités en ce qui concernent le régime de retraite ainsi que les avantages sociaux seront protégés, maintenus et améliorés. Cela peut nécessiter éventuellement des démarches légales.
- 2 – de s'assurer que l'Association agit prudemment en matière de finance en tenant les coûts d'opération le plus bas possible.
- 3 – de tenir régulièrement, et au moins deux fois par an, des Réunions Générales (une de ces réunions sera la Réunion Générale Annuelle de l'Association). Des réunions supplémentaires seront tenues si nécessaires.
- 4 – de promouvoir le contact entre l'Association et ses membres en publiant le bulletin CUPARUC au moins trois

fois par an et par des communications supplémentaires comme requis.

- 5 – d'encourager l'interaction entre les membres de l'Association en planifiant différentes activités sociales.
- 6 – de surveiller la gestion du Fonds de Bourses de l'Association.
- 7 – de tenir à date une base de données des membres de l'Association ainsi qu'un site Web.
- 8 – de s'occuper au mieux possible des problèmes des retraités en les référant aux ressources appropriées.
- 9 – d'encourager tous les retraités d'adhérer à l'Association et d'y rester.
- 10- de tenir des liens avec des associations de retraités d'autres universités.
- 11- de prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires afin d'assurer le bon fonctionnement de l'Association.

Bilinguisme est souhaitable mais n'est pas essentiel. Quelques activités (Conseil de Gouvernance, Réunions Générales) demandent la présence du Président ou la Présidente à Montréal. Nous n'avons malheureusement pas les moyens de couvrir les frais de voyage.



CARS-YOUR EGO OR YOUR WALLET

AlexS.



Oh put your hands down. This is not a stick-up. That drama only plays out at the dealership when you buy a car. I am just talking about cars. What I have is this: One refrigerator, two scooters, BMW the firm, Elvis the king of rock, myself, Don, an Italian entrepreneur and some Chianti. Can't get a story out of this? Yes you can!



Figure 1 BMW Isetta - 1955-1962

Chances are you never heard of, or saw this BMW, see Fig. 1, the most successful micro car of the late 50ties with over 160k sold, licensed and build in half a dozen countries, among them Brazil, England and Spain.

It actually started as an Italian job, with an obscure manufacturer of scooters and refrigerators, who worked late one night. I suppose this is where the Chianti could come in, a red wine from Tuscany, in a squat bottle enclosed in straw, called "fiasco"!

For Don Rivolta, the Italian entrepreneur, it did not take long to see a refrigerator flanked by a scooter on each side: open the fridge door in front, sit inside and try to drive home. I am not suggesting anything here but presto and rapidamente he had a prototype. He added a small scooter engine and entered several of these in the 'Mille Miglia', a thousand mile race and promptly took the top three fuel economy spots.

BMW, teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, when their big cars were too expensive at that time, picked up the concept. This car saved them. This Bimmer was a hot car, it was so hot that even Elvis got one, in red. He could see past



Figure 2 Elvis and the BMW

the pink Caddys, a true car guy! I was a student when I bought mine, my wallet did the talking.

Some specifications: 7.5 ft long, 4.5 ft wide, weight 770 pounds, 12 horse power, the legendary air cooled one cylinder 250cc BMW motorcycle engine, four speed manual. Fuel economy 3.5 ltr/100, top speed 85 km, two seater bench, sunroof, sliding windows.

The package \$1038 (1960). The fun, priceless.

Now, so many years later check this out, Fig.3, another retro car, like the VW and the Mini. This is the proposed retro BMW Isetta. I have my 1000 bucks ready!



Figure 3 BMW Isetta for 2012?



NOMINATIONS

Un comité sera établi afin de trouver un nouveau Président (et d'autres postes au sein du comité exécutif de l'Association). Si cela vous intéresse ou si vous connaissez quelqu'un qui ferait un bon Président, (ou qui pourrait servir dans un autre poste), veuillez nous le faire savoir en nous donnant les raisons de votre recommandation. Envoyez l'à l'adresse ci-dessous ou à moi par courriel (grahammartin@sympatico.ca), ou vous pouvez appeler 514-697-1838. Ci-joint vous trouverez un esquisse du rôle comme je le vois. Le comité exécutif va recommander un ou plusieurs candidates à la Réunion Générale Annuelle le 28 avril.

Si vous voulez soumettre votre candidature directement aux membres sans passer par le Comité de Nomination, sentez-vous libre pour faire ainsi. Soumettez votre nom ainsi que les noms de deux autres membres qui soutiendraient votre nomination. Évidemment votre résumé sera d'une importance capitale dans ce cas-ci.

La décision sera prise lors de la Réunion Générale Annuelle à moins que les membres décident de procéder d'une autre façon. J'aurais souhaité ouvrir ce procédé à tous les membres, non seulement ceux à la Réunion Générale. Hélas ce procédé rendra nécessaire des envois postaux et nous coûterait très cher. À moins qu'exigé à la Réunion Annuelle, nous ne le ferons pas.

NEW MEMBERS

- Mary Ann Cipriano
- Susan B. Magor
- Sandra James
- Simone Badilescu
- Ghislaine Guerard
- David R.J. Clark
- Liana Howes
- Sandra Spina
- Christine Webb

CONDOLENCES - DECEASED MEMBERS

- Alice Dugdale
- Guy Le Cavalier
- Giorgio Pederzoli
- Patricia Kottmeier
- Susan Jessie Russell
- Bella Davignon
- Marc Andre Tisseur
- John Goodwin
- Ernest Joos
- Audrey Wells



NEXT MEETING

April 28, 2011 - LB-130, Loyola campus
Guest Speaker: Doug Lightfoot, his topic:
"Energy supply is more important than climate change"

The CUPARUC Newsletter

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