

CUPARUC

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

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THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to start by wishing you all the very best for a prosperous, happy and healthy New Year. I sincerely hope you all had great holidays with family and friends.

Your Association continues to be active on the Pension and Benefits front even though the University is dragging its feet. There has been no real progress on the Indexing formula although we are now working with some of the other associations to push the issue. I gather we will be getting another premium holiday on the Health plan but probably only for a month.

On one issue several of you have raised, the recent problem with Income Trusts has definitely adversely affected many seniors' retirement plans. As far as our pension plan is concerned, I have asked, and been assured, it had little or no effect on our plan performance. Our plan is solvent and still doing very well.

On the social side, we had a successful day at the races and a successful annual party on December 13. Our thanks again to all those who donated door prizes and to our entertainers, Peter Paquet, Martin Franklin and Alex Sengbush. For the spring, we envisage several other events including the regular sugaring off, a casino visit, and some new ideas. Our next "formal" meeting is currently scheduled for April 25 2007

Electronically we are crawling forward. Peter has updated the web site at cupa.concordia.ca; we will send information electronically to as many as we can.

A reminder, it is fee time again. Please send in your \$15.00 for 2006-2007. If you need information, you can ask Colin Waters at colin.waters@videotron.ca or myself at gmartin@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-697-1838.

A Healthy and Prosperous 2007
Graham Martin

RAPPORT DU PRÉSIDENT

De la part de tout l'Exécutif, je vous présente nos vœux de bonheur, de santé, de prospérité pour l'année 2007. J'espère que vous avez passé d'excellentes vacances auprès de votre famille ou de vos amis

Votre association continue d'œuvrer dans le domaine des retraites et des bénéfices malgré la lenteur de l'Administration. La question de l'indexation stagne, mais nous allons, afin de mieux avancer, nous joindre à d'autres associations. Nous bénéficions d'un petit conge pour nos primes d'assurance, mais il s'agit, je crois, d'à peine un mois.

Vous avez été plusieurs à vous inquiéter au sujet des fiducies de revenu; la récente décision a nécessairement affecté de façon négative les projets de retraite de bon nombre de personnes. Mais l'on m'affirme qu'il y a eu peu d'impact sur notre plan de retraite. Celui-ci demeure solvable et se porte plutôt bien.

Et nos activités sociales ? Nous avons passé une fort agréable journée aux courses, et la fête de Noël était très réussie. Nous tenons ici à remercier nos donateurs ainsi que nos «artistes» : Peter Paquet, Martin Franklin et Alex Sengbush. D'ici le printemps, nous pensons à d'autres activités, dont une visite au casino, la traditionnelle partie de sucre et quelques nouveautés. Notre prochaine réunion officielle aura lieu le 25 avril prochain.

Sur le plan de l'électronique, nous avançons à pas d'escargot; grace à Peter, le site web est à jour (cupa.concordia.ca) et nous pensons envoyer nos communications par courriel à ceux qui le souhaitent.

Un petit rappel; c'est l'heure des réadhésions. Si ce n'est déjà fait, veuillez nous faire parvenir vos 15\$ pour 2006-2007. Dans le doute, renseignez-vous auprès de Colin Waters (colin.waters@videotron.ca) ou de votre président (gmartin@alcor.concordia.ca).

Passez une bonne et heureuse année
Graham Martin

EDITORIAL

«Old age is no place for sissies.» Bette Davis
I think that might really be all I have to say.

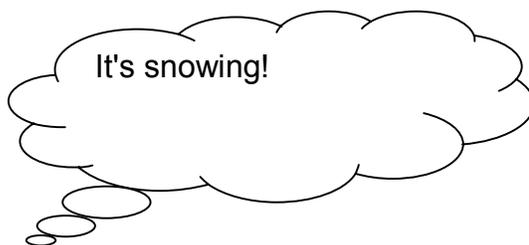
Probably, however, an editorial is supposed to be a bit longer and actually express the orientation – literary, social, political – of the newspaper where it is published. I'll skip that bit as I'm not convinced that a «party line» was ever established (fortunately.)

What I will do is express our collective thanks to all the people who have responded either to the first issue I produced or to all my pleas for collaboration. So, in the first category, I would like to express particular thanks to a former colleague from Loyola, Alex Sengbush, who took the trouble to come all the way from Toronto in order to attend our Christmas fête and project for us two very fast power point shows, both witty, intelligent and beautiful. He also has a wife who embroiders professionally so he corresponds to two of the items I mentioned last Fall. Thanks, Alex.

You can see for yourselves how other people have responded, Barbara Harding, Katherine Waters, Jane Gellert, Hugh McQueen, Jim and Pat Whitelaw. I'm sure we're all grateful for their contributions and I certainly hope that more of you will be inspired by such good examples.

Time to read on!

Maïr a.k.a. Polly



L'été s'en vient !



ÉDITORIAL

«Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait», vieux dicton, un peu moins vrai peut-être aujourd'hui que par le passé. Les compagnies pharmaceutiques sont passées par là !

Un editorial est censé exprimer des opinions, paraît-il, mais ce soir ma tête est vide, et je ne sais pas du tout quelles seraient celles de mes collègues du Bureau. Je vous les épargne alors.

En revanche, je compte remercier tous les braves qui ont réagi à la lecture du dernier numéro ou qui ont choisi d'être des Schéhérazades modernes. Alex Sengbush qui s'est donné la peine de venir de Toronto pour assister à notre déjeuner de Noël et nous offrir deux projections Powerpoint très rapides, très jolies, et fort instructives. Et les Schéhérazades ? Katherine Waters, Jane Gellert, Hugh McQueen, Barbara Harding. Jim and Pat Whitelaw.

Allez. Suivez les bons exemples !

Maïr alias Polly

My Day in Court

by Jane Gellert

“It was a dark and stormy night...”, oops, wrong story. Actually, it was a lovely fall day when I walked to my mailbox, cheerfully unaware of what awaited me. I grabbed my mail and started the usual sort: bill, advertisement, bill, professional journal, summons, bill, wait a minute, “summons”? Indeed, there in all its glory was a summons to appear for jury duty two weeks hence. Well, to shorten a shaggy dog story, I woke at the crack of dawn and arrived at the courthouse as instructed at 8:30 am. As I went through the security checkpoint, I started to laugh. The policeman was so much taller than I was, I had to step backwards to look up and see his face. I guess he took my laughter as a sign of senility (I’ve let some gray hair grow in), because he personally escorted me up to the jury room.

I signed in, received instructions about the coffee (already the consistency of mud), bathroom location and was told to sit until called. And sit I did, for an hour and a half. Finally, I joined a smaller group of people and we filed into the courtroom. Another lottery awaited us. The court clerk put our names into a bingo box, spun it around and then picked potential jurors at random. Since I never win anything, I was sure I would not be called. “Juror number 29, Jane Gellert, please take a seat in the jury box”. So much for that luck!

There we were eight men and women, awaiting Perry Mason or Jack McCoy. We knew we had been chosen for a civil case and I imagined that this was my opportunity to redress a terrible wrong, save some trees or protect someone’s civil rights. You know, you can take the woman out of the 60’s and 70’s but.....We sat for another half hour and finally the plaintiff and defendant arrived. The plaintiff’s attorney, who looked a bit like Richard Gere, spent another hour and a half telling us about the case and asking questions to assess (I guess) our suitability to sit as jurors. Then the defendant’s attorney took her turn. Both lawyers asked us several times if we could *promise* to try the case on the “facts, just the facts...” and to be reasonable and rational in our considerations. We all nodded our heads in agreement and promised. What could we do, reveal that most of us were neither reasonable nor rational; that faced with a plaintiff that had suffered physical pain and emotional anguish, we would overlook all that and consider the “facts”!

Finally, the *voir dire* ended and we took the required bathroom break. What next? Would we finally meet the judge, a presence who we were told would supervise this process but never appeared? Would we start hearing testimony and seeing the gory pictures they said we would have to see? What would botched plastic surgery look like? Would the plaintiff break down and sob as we had been warned she might? Perhaps I could write a TV script and submit it to CBS or NBC?

The court clerk, lawyers, plaintiff and defendant returned. We stood up and sat down. The court clerk moved to the middle of the courtroom and intoned “The following jurors are dismissed with the thanks of the court: juror number one, juror number 18 and juror number 29”. Number 29, that’s me!(ok - I). Dismissed! Why? I promised to be reasonable and rational. I never revealed I was a card-carrying member of the Institut Simone de Beauvoir and proud defender of women’s rights. I’d raised my right hand and promised to be honest and true. All for naught. My attempt to be a good citizen and fulfill my civic duties had been rebuffed.

With nary a word of explanation, I was ushered out of the courtroom, past the police officer who with a rather knowing look on his face, opened the door to speed me on my way. There was an Alice in Wonderland quality to this experience and as I stepped through the looking glass, I realized what the policeman had known all along; that while I had been imagining my role as a heroine in Law and Order, it had snowed.

Movie Review

I never thought I would become a movie reviewer but, after a rash moment expounding my praise of the film "The Queen" to our newsletter editor, I found myself committed to a review. By now most of you have probably seen it but if you haven't I strongly recommend it. Helen Mirren (the Queen) with a good supporting cast does a superb job of showing the Royal family dealing with the crisis of Diana's death and indeed the evolution of the monarchy into the society of the 21st century. The film rings true to life and indeed one can see traces of it in the way they are currently dealing with Prince William's latest girlfriend. I recommend it strongly.

Oh yes, a note of caution, be careful if you ever make commitment to Polly Verthuy; you had better deliver. She follows up on them with a vengeance!!

by Graham Martin

I PROTEST !!!!!!! Editor's Note.

Tiens, moi aussi je vais y aller d'une appreciation cinématographique.

Bon Cop, Bad Cop. Film canadien.

Ah, les deux solitudes. Alors que les francophones s'y précipitent d'un bout à l'autre du Canada, rares sont les anglophones qui s'y aventurent. Voilà la suprême ironie. Ce film, bilingue (moitié/moitié) et très bien sous-titré de part et d'autre, traite justement et de façon bien humoristique ces fameuses deux solitudes, et les anglophones, en 2006 et 2007 encore, prouvent qu'elles perdurent. C'est bien dommage. surtout que s'y trouve également une bonne dose de nationalisme canadien !

Toujours est-il que voilà un excellent film, dont Kevin Tierney (2 fois diplômé de Concordia) est le producteur et Éric Canuel le réalisateur. On ne peut demander mieux que Canuel dans ce rôle. Il met en scène des comédiens célèbres, en particulier Patrick Huard et Colm Feore. Vous avez peut-être vu ce dernier à la télévision dans le rôle de Trudeau ou alors en train de jouer du Shakespeare à Stratford.

Le fond de l'histoire ? On trouve un cadavre à la frontière entre le Québec et l'Ontario; la police des deux provinces se trouvent donc dans l'obligation de travailler ensemble pour résoudre le mystère. C'est vite dit ! L'un est sérieux et méthodique, l'autre plus intuitif et primesautier. Mais après de nombreux périples, plusieurs scènes de violence, quelques-unes de sexe, et bon nombre de cadavres, le public s'en va, très content du temps passé à le regarder. Vous voulez connaître la fin ? Allez voir le film.

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A Day at the races.

by Barbara Harding

"HIPPODROME !" The original name for Blue Bonnets Raceway, which is soon to be relocated somewhere outside of Montreal. The area is to be redeveloped into homes, shops and condos. Well we have done our part in trying to keep the Hippodrome here, and this is how we did it.

On November 5th, 2006 a gathering of Concordia pensioners descended upon the race track to partake of a wonderful buffet brunch, and an exciting day of attempting to enhance our incomes. The minimum bet for each race was two dollars, however from the excitement of the crowd one would think that we were wagering tremendous sums of money. Win, Place, or Show, any one of these would return our wager and a tidy profit to boot. Hmm, I bet two dollars in each race, eleven races, my tidy profit amounted to a minus twenty two dollars over a period of about five hours. I have lost much more than that in five minutes in Vegas. You win some, you lose some. I lost but others won.

Aaaahhhh! It is only money. Besides I actually was a winner. I ate as much as I wanted to (as much as I could), and I had a wonderful day of socializing with some of my fellow retirees. We were inside, warm and dry. Much better than being outside in the rain and cold of a November day.

We have a number of events in the future. There is the Christmas dinner, a visit to a sugar shack, (more eating) and a visit to the Casino. At all of these activities we have a great time. We meet and greet some old timers and some new retirees. Come and join us! We miss you!

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And here's a fascinating letter from Hugh McQueen, with the story of his eventful summer in a European country most of us scarcely know..

Hello everyone

Albania Visit 27Apr-1May (from collaboration at Univ.of Ancona, Italy)

The quickest ferry (9h overnight) was from Bari (6h south of Ancona) to Durres, Albania. I chatted on the train with a medical student who was going home at end of term and she guided me to the public bus that goes to the port in 20min for 1 euro. She also showed me how to get to the right gates for tickets and passports at both ends of the journey. On Friday morning, Aferdita Vivecka (physics prof at Tirrana U) was waiting for me with the rector's car and chauffeur. I was his guest since I had sent the library 4500kg (5 pallets 4x4x5ft) of books (quarter from my own library since I was moving to smaller office in new bldg, 3 quarters from other profs). I had met Aferdita (about 50) several times at Ancona where Prof Enrico Evangelista had been training her (Italian bursary). That was how I had learned of the desperate straits of the uni because of the stalinist dictator from 1945 to 92. I had also learned this from Enrico who had visited and from Terry Langdon (prof at U Southern Cal) who had organized a donation of computers. I visited the physics lab for first year students; the equipment was like what I had used in 1951.

After the mafia struggles until 1998 when a democratic government finally got into control, things are now quite peaceful with little crime. There is a new simple 4-lane 100km highway to Tirana. The main thoroughfares in the city are better paved than Montreal. an important one is a boulevard with the small river Lara (straightened with wide grass and treed banks) running in the median. at right angles is the main boulevard running from the main square with museums and opera house to the university. there are many new solid artistic apartment houses along main streets but behind them is a warren of narrow rutted streets with mainly old badly maintained apartments.

The rector met with me for about half an hour and explained the advances being made in the university but saying that these older books filled a real gap in the holdings. He presented me with a book on Albania in world art that tells a lot about its history 1700-1900 when it was considered a very romantic (Byron) but somewhat primitive culture strongly influenced by Turkish occupation. I then visited the library; i was welcomed like a hero by a dozen librarians who were all chattering at once in a joyful manner. The books sorted by subject and the journals were under several teams for each discipline for cataloging in the most modern method (many had engineering and degrees). One could speak english fluently at a mile a minute saying that they were so pleased to receive such modern stuff. They presented me with a book on the Illyrians who inhabited albania from the time of the greeks, through the romans, the barbarian invasions into the Turkish subjugation in 1380. On Sunday, with Aferdita and another prof I was taken to Truja, the castle of Skanderbeg who defeated the Turks in 1414 and held them at bay for 40 years (he was a european hero and visited the governments of italy, austria, poland etc). When the turks finally conquered about 200,000 refugees went to italy and thousands of women and children were sent as slaves to the Ottoman empire (the men having been killed in the battles,etc.)

The current population is about an equal mixture of moslems, orthodox and catholics. Although the communists destroyed many churches (executing clergymen of all faiths), there are some left in Tirrana that I was able to visit. There is also a new catholic cathedral of modern design. private enterprise (stores with

every kind of modern goods) is flourishing, possibly too much; there are vendors selling farm products, household needs and toys in every public place. Albania has a bad name because of the troubles 1945-1992 but it should be thought of historically as a most unfortunate country. Although Greece and parts of the Balkans were freed from Turkish rule in mid 1800, Albania along with Bulgaria was held until 1912 (there were no public schools). It got caught in WW1 and its territory was grabbed by neighbors until the peace commission redefined them in 1920. In 1939 it was invaded by Italy resulting in a partisan resistance war. In 1945 the communists murdered the democrats and killed hundreds more in the next 45 years. Compare this to Canada that saw small scale fighting within its borders in 1760, 1776 US, 1812 US, 1832 Quebec, 1880 Riel and nothing since then.

I was a guest of Aferdita and her retired husband Vassili in the apartment they earned about 1993 through his work as an engineer. It is large and well constructed in every way (their daughter is now in uni in Vienna). Originally state owned, they were allowed to buy it. The university salaries and the pensions are however rather meager compared to those in the private sector. They are orthodox and are happy with the new religious freedom. Like Italians, Albanians eat lunch about 2pm and supper after 8pm. I had the experience of Turkish coffee that I will definitely not adopt. I managed to get out jogging every morning and now continue with my legs being restored to good shape. I never had any security problem but got lots of stares since there was never another jogger on the streets.

My trip back to Italy was uneventful, I became acquainted with another student who upon landing got me into a shared taxi to the station at a cost of 4euros each.

Regards Hugh

BUT IT'S NOT OVER YET (Editor's note)m

BIKE ACCIDENT IN ITALY.

On Sunday 7 May in a town near Ancona (where my colleague lives), I had an accident with car as I cycled on the beach road. I survived with scratches but the bike is a loss. I was returning from a ride in the mountains and travelling on the beach road at high speed to get exercise. A car pulled out of a parking space when I was about 2-3 m from it. I deflected towards the center and braked but it was actually doing a U turn; the driver must have been watching for traffic in the opposite lane and only looked back in my direction later. The car continued to a 120 degree turn before stopping at the point where we met tangentially. I was thrown onto the road suffering lacerations on left elbow and right knee. My forehead also struck the road but the helmet took the impact with the outer shell breaking; I only had a slight headache and no neck injury. The bicycle wheel and frame were buckled. Through the grace of God, I once again walked off the road carrying the bike. The driver took me to my friend's house. Later, Enrico took me to the hospital emergency where the wait was quite short. They cleaned and dressed the wounds and checked thoroughly that there was nothing else wrong with me.

13 May: Except for two bad scrapes, I am pretty well healed; as a result of stretches my bruised leg is pretty good. My friend here had a old bike not used for a decade. I have reconditioned it and had several small trials to complete adjustments. Today I cycled to a neighboring fortified town on top of a mountain about same as Mount Royal relative to Old Port. I succeeded without a rest although there are only 5 gears but at the bottom range relative to the damaged bike with 15.

19 May: I arrive home with all scrapes cured except for a small one on the ankle bone that is infected. With antibiotics, it was to take 10 days to clear up. The wound however would not heal because of poor blood flow at the ankle bone (I am not diabetic). It also was re-injured by a luggage cart in the airport in July. With daily dressing changes of Intra-site gel, it finally healed over by the end of September. My friend in Ancona has informed me that the driver blames me and his insurance will not remunerate me for the destruction of the bike., **hugh**

Down Memory Lane with Katherine Waters

I came to Loyola in 1961 when the drive by the President, Patrick Malone S.J., to have Loyola adopt Anglo-Canadian university norms in anticipation of a university charter, was well under way. Although the college was Jesuit-owned, Malone was never concerned with anyone's creed, race, or gender. Most of the faculty were non-Catholic; apart from the Theology Department, there were only about half-a-dozen teaching Jesuits. I never heard the words "Catholic college". Most of us were unaware that we were technically affiliated with Université de Montreal. The only reminder of the «collège classique» tradition was an early directive to ensure that the young gentlemen wore jackets; to this the newly hired faculty, such as Laurier Lapierre, Donald Savage and myself, replied that we were professors, not policemen, and that was the end of that.

There were some charming remainders: the old tailor to the Jesuits, his office near to mine, to whom for years I happily brought all my and my young children's mending and alterations; the ancient Jesuits who emerged in the spring, like vengeful crows in fluttering black robes, to stab any dandelion daring to rear its head amid the pristine lawns; brightly-coloured religious statues on pedestals which miraculously migrated over the years to the homes of certain faculty members, continuing to grace bathroom windows to this day.

Numbering around 26, English was probably the largest Department. It was like a family, with much socializing. For example, my two wonderful Chairs in the 60's, Father McGuigan and Giff Hooper, arranged departmental meetings around my childcare schedule (I was still the only woman).

In addition to further developing curriculum and Honours programs where the final authority was overwhelmingly departmental, one of the most exciting endeavours was setting up academic structures: senate, rank and tenure committees, appeals board. We faculty apparently had *carte blanche* to claim authority over whatever we thought was academic— -which, of course, was everything. It was academic *shangri-la*. Until late 1969 and the "Santhanam Affair".

Professor Santhanam's contract, renewed yearly for the previous 8 years, had not been renewed. He appealed to Senate. Senate voted that a committee study his case and that in the interim he be given his salary. The next day a hitherto invisible body, the Jesuit Board of Trustees, declared that Senate's decision was *ultra vires*. The entire Senate representation from Arts and Science, faculty and students, resigned. The rump Senate futilely attempted to conduct university business in face of such overt mockery as student observers wearing gas masks to dramatize the smell. Soon we who had resigned were re-elected after tumultuous late-into-the night meetings. The President then sent non-renewal notices to over 30 faculty. The students, joined by a goodly number of faculty, went on strike and peacefully occupied the Administration Building for over a week, during which time faculty brought in hot and healthy food, and much entertainment was provided. Until the college was closed down and the police evacuated the occupiers without incident. The media war began. The administration had the publishers to lunch. The faculty breakfasted with the reporters, many of them former students. Readers may remember Aislin's cartoon of Father Malone using a crucifix as a slingshot and captioned "For Christ's Sake". The climax was the English Department Funeral, at which a coffin surrounded by (stolen) wreaths was placed on the Loyola Chapel steps filled with crosses, each with the name of a non-renewed faculty member. A long procession of mourners filed past, including the chairs of the three other Montreal English Departments. Media attention across Canada. We hired a young lawyer named Brian Mulroney to appeal to the Quebec government to set up a commission of inquiry. The Commissioner, Judge Perry Meyer, ordered all those non-renewed who had appealed, except one, to be rehired. Much celebration that night, although Mulroney strategically retreated quickly as the fumes of pot in the faculty club became overwhelming. All this for the sake of one LTA faculty member. Hard to imagine such an occurrence in today's Concordia.

The 1970's were years of feminist achievements. My close friend, Dr. Marguerite Andersen, became the first woman elected president of a Canadian faculty association. She negotiated a full year's paid maternity leave for faculty—a Canadian first (the bewildered Jesuits would probably have granted any

demand to do with women). We demanded women be on all search committees and on just about everything else (quite a workload for the few of us). In the same year as Sir George Williams, the first credit course in Women's Studies was taught and Loyola became the first college to establish a Major in Women's Studies.

Nowadays, despite advances – or advancement-- there is little of the autonomy, flexibility, collegiality and community of those Loyola days.

Translation

Several years ago the Executive of CUPA was faced with the problem of translations for the Newsletter. As a result it adopted the policy that the President's Message and any official pronouncements from CUPA would be translated but that other articles would appear only in the language in which they were submitted.

The question has arisen again in connection with the publication of the minutes of our meetings. They are written in English but unfortunately neither the Editor nor the other members of the Executive have the time, or in many cases the expertise, to translate them for publication. We would welcome volunteers who would undertake this project (or translation of other articles). Unfortunately paid translation is very expensive and beyond our resources.

Graham Martin

Chronique d'un Exode

La deuxième guerre mondiale, on le sait, est encore très présente dans la conscience ou l'imaginaire de nos contemporains. Des centaines, voire des milliers d'ouvrages lui ont été consacrés, de sorte qu'on pourrait se demander s'il est encore possible d'écrire quelque chose de neuf sur le sujet. Mais, parmi tous ces ouvrages, **Suite française**, d'Irène Némirovsky, occupe à mon avis une place à part. C'est un roman bouleversant qui décrit pour ainsi dire en direct l'exode des Français fuyant devant l'occupation allemande en juin 1940.

L'histoire de la publication de cette œuvre tient elle-même du roman, et peut-être du miracle. Née à Kiev et d'origine juive, Irène Némirovsky, femme remarquable qui maîtrisait sept langues, était déjà un auteur connu et respecté en France, son pays d'adoption, lorsqu'éclata la deuxième grande guerre. Arrêtée en juillet 1942 par les gendarmes français, elle fut aussitôt déportée à Auschwitz où elle mourut le mois suivant, suivie de près par son mari Michel Epstein, qui connut le même sort en octobre 1942. Avant d'être arrêtée, Irène Némirovsky avait eu le temps de confier le manuscrit de **Suite française** à sa fille aînée, Denise Epstein. Forcées de vivre en exil après la mort de leurs parents, ses deux filles (encore des enfants) emportèrent le précieux manuscrit dans une valise, d'un refuge précaire à un autre, dans toutes leurs pérégrinations dans divers pays européens, jusqu'à ce qu'elles trouvent enfin une terre d'accueil. Ce n'est que soixante ans plus tard que **Suite française** fut enfin publié, en France, par l'Institut Mémoire de l'Édition contemporaine.

Némirovsky peint le désarroi de toute une population quittant Paris en hâte, et cheminant dans le désordre et le chaos des routes; chacun des personnages réagira à sa façon devant cette épreuve. Ces personnages ne sont pas des héros qui se distingueraient par quelque action d'éclat; ce sont des gens ordinaires, qui mènent une vie sans histoires, mais que la tragique défaite de juin 1940 va forcer à se rencontrer. On y croise de riches bourgeois fermement persuadés que leur rang social leur donne droit à un traitement de faveur, des aristocrates dédaigneux de la populace, un écrivain célèbre imbu de lui-même, un riche excentrique uniquement préoccupé de préserver sa collection de porcelaines rares. Il est frappant de constater l'inconscience des nantis qui croient pouvoir maintenir intacts leur mode de vie et leurs privilèges comme si la débâcle n'avait pas eu lieu. Mais l'auteur nous présente aussi un couple de Parisiens de

condition modeste, inquiets de leur fils soldat dont ils sont sans nouvelles, un jeune prêtre idéaliste assassiné par de jeunes défavorisés à qui il tente de venir en aide, des fermiers pauvres qui accueillent et soignent des blessés dans leur maison, au péril de leur vie. Peu à peu l'ennemi prend possession du territoire, et la présence des troupes allemandes (dans un village au nom fictif) réveille les tensions sociales et les frustrations des habitants forcés de les côtoyer. Or ces Allemands ne sont pas des brutes, mais des hommes civilisés et courtois qui ne font que leur métier.

Tout cela est raconté sur un ton intimiste, sans aucune sensiblerie, totalement dénué de pathos, le ton d'un témoin lucide et tranquillement désespéré. Le principal mérite de ce roman et ce qui le rend remarquable, à mon avis, c'est qu'à travers le destin individuel de ses personnages, l'auteur nous fait voir les bassesses, les mesquineries, les petites lâchetés quotidiennes de ceux qui croient être des gens « bien », mais aussi le courage, la ténacité dans l'épreuve, l'entraide et la fraternité, les gestes de solidarité qui rapprochent ces compagnons d'infortune. L'événement tragique qui change leur vie est un grand révélateur de la nature humaine, et en cela le roman atteint à l'universel.

Dans ses Notes sur l'état de la France, qui accompagnent cette œuvre, Irène Némirovsky montre qu'elle ne se faisait aucune illusion, ni sur le sort qui l'attendait, ni sur l'attitude de certains Français vis-à-vis de la défaite et de la collaboration. Ces remarques lucides et un peu cyniques ajoutent une résonance personnelle au contexte historique, et nous éclairent sur le cheminement de l'auteur dans la construction de son récit. Bref, une œuvre forte, à la fois implacable et touchante. C'est avec beaucoup d'à-propos que Denise Epstein écrit en dédicace de l'œuvre de sa mère :

« Sur les traces de ma mère et de mon père,
pour ma sœur Elisabeth Gille,
pour mes enfants et petits-enfants,
cette Mémoire à transmettre, et
pour tous ceux qui ont connu et
connaissent encore aujourd'hui
le drame de l'intolérance. »

Béregère Gaudet
24 janvier 2007

Our Experience of Macular Degeneration **by Pat and Jim Whitelaw**

Macular Degeneration is the loss of central vision in the eye. What remains is peripheral vision. While it can start earlier, it is more common in individuals in their late sixties and beyond. Pat first had symptoms in her late sixties. In her early seventies she had to give up driving - a loss of independence which is difficult to accept. Gradually she found reading more difficult. She can watch television by sitting fairly close to the set and using her peripheral vision. Organizations such as the Montreal Association for the Blind provide expert services and offer a range of visual aids, all the way from playing cards with large characters and figures to special two-tier glasses (the visual, not the drinking variety), which make it possible to see much of what goes on at concerts, for example, or even movies. Jim has a hearing defect, so we are complementary - Pat is the one that hears and Jim is the one that sees! We sometimes help one another out, bearing in mind that one cannot introduce a running commentary if that drives neighbours up the wall!

One of the most useful aids is an Optelec reader, which looks like a computer monitor and has adjustable magnification and focus. This is expensive to buy, but has been a wonderful help. It may well be that there are other manufacturers of similar gadgets. Pat uses it for a variety of purposes, all the way from reading recipes to doing Sudoku puzzles. She also has a

portable device, made by the same people, which she can use for such things as reading menus in restaurants, for example. Unfortunately, the main reader has not worked for reading books or newspapers, because it is too difficult to move from one line to the next. So, what do you do if you are a keen reader?

The answer is the audio-book. These have been on the market for many years and originally used tapes. Over the past few years these have increasingly been done on compact discs. In most cases, the readers have been excellent. Public libraries usually carry a varying amount of titles, but, in these days of restricted budgets, their number is inevitably limited. The CNIB has its own libraries and we understand that it will send books, periodicals and newspapers on tape without charge. An enterprise called Simply Audio-Books operates in Canada and makes available audio-books on loan. You can subscribe for the number of books you want per month and they will send them, as available, with a post-paid return envelope. We have not used them yet, but plan to try them out when we have established the availability of titles of interest to Pat. Audio-books are of course available in bookstores, but they are not cheap - prices are around \$40 to \$60 each, depending on the length of the book and other commercial factors.

Another consideration is whether or not you accept abridged versions. Most titles seem to be available in both abridged and unabridged versions. If you have been a regular reader of Reader's Digest Condensed Books, you may well be quite happy with abridged versions of audio-books. Pat has found abridged versions frustrating, so the format is very important to her. As can be imagined, libraries often buy the abridged versions, as this allows them to buy more titles with their limited budgets.

After surveying the market, with the help of our computer-savvy children, we went with Audible.com. This company, operating out of the U.S., offers many thousands of titles, a large proportion of them recent, including books, periodicals and music. To use it, you need a computer with Internet access and a CD burner - and, of course, someone who can operate it!. You pick your book and download it from the Internet. We subscribe to two titles a month, for which the cost is currently US\$23. You can, of course order additional titles, but the cost can be substantially more. Audible does, also, have periodic special offers - just before Christmas, for example, they offered a large number of titles for US\$9.95 each.

Downloading the average book, using audio format 3, which you select at the point of downloading, and which we have found to give excellent reception, takes less than ten minutes. At that point, you can simply listen to your book on your computer, if you are comfortable with that. We find it much better to burn the books on to CDs. The average book takes up about ten to twelve discs, although block-busters can go as high as 35! We have found that Sony discs, which are regularly available on special at about 50¢ each, give the best reception. It takes about five minutes to burn each disc. As you complete the burning of each disc, you can of course simply write the content on it with a felt pen, but we found that an outfit called Stomper offers stick-on labels, with an accompanying computer programme entitled Click'NDesign, which offers a wealth of backgrounds and all the usual fonts. This software is available from Bureau en Gros/Staples, and doubtless from other enterprises. This allows you to produce a professional-looking product. You get a hundred labels for about \$20. The initial package, which includes the Click'NDesign software, costs a little more.

As for listening to your audio-books, you can of course play them on your hi-fi system or DVD player. Pat likes to listen to her books while she is doing things around the house, sitting in doctors' or dentists' waiting rooms, or when she goes to bed, and she uses a Sony Walkman, with light weight headphones. It is important that the player have a "bookmark" switch that will allow you to stop it when the phone rings or somebody comes to the door - otherwise you have to go back to the beginning of the disc. Her player cost around \$100. Almost all electronic devices these days have very small control buttons, which someone with limited vision will have difficulty in reading, so it is important to have simple controls which can be memorized and activated by

feel. We are not yet into MP3s or other “new-fangled” devices, so you might want to explore these.

We are now looking into the possibility of carrying out exchanges with other audio-book users interested in similar fields. We should also be interested in hearing about other people's experiences, and I am sure that our editor would be happy to get feed-back. Happy listening!

It is with much grief that we announce the very recent death of **Michael (Mike) Brian**. His wife, Mary, whom he adored, died, as you will recall from the last issue of the Newsletter, in 2006. Life for Mike became even more difficult after that, and now children and grandchildren will mourn the double loss in less than a year. Mike was well known across the university community; a well-respected and much beloved professor of English, specializing in the study of James Joyce, he was also Department Chair, President of the Faculty Union, President of the inter-university Faculty Union, gardening specialist. His cuttings from his garden will continue to flourish in many Montreal gardens. Both were also well known for their great parties. His flamboyant personality and verbal brilliance attracted attention wherever he went. He, like Mary, will be much missed.

Femmes de Montréal Women

Notre président m'a invitée à vous parler de ma récente nomination au Conseil des Montréalaises. Voici la description officielle: «Le conseil municipal de la Ville de Montréal a créé ce Conseil le 18 mai 2004 et nommé les 15 membres qui y siègent ou qui s'y succèdent depuis le 27 septembre 2004. Provenant d'horizons divers, ces femmes dynamiques contribuent par leur expertise à l'avancement des débats et décisions qui touchent les Montréalaises. Le Conseil des Montréalaises agit en tant qu'instance consultative auprès de l'administration municipale sur toute question liée à l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et à la condition féminine. Il veut favoriser une plus grande participation des citoyennes à la vie publique de la cité. Cet outil démocratique est un levier collectif afin de trouver des réponses aux besoins et préoccupations des Montréalaises.»

Voilà un exemple de notre travail. Nous avons soumis au Conseil municipal en décembre 2006 deux documents importants : le premier résulte de notre travail de recherche sur les femmes sans logis et les mal logées, *Les femmes et le logement à Montréal : portrait de la situation*, le deuxième comporte notre avis et des recommandations, *Les femmes et le logement à Montréal*. Ces deux documents sont actuellement disponibles en français. Une version anglaise sera portée sur notre site Web vers la fin du mois de février.

Pour de plus amples renseignements sur nos activités, consultez donc notre site : ville.montreal.qc.ca/conseildesmontrealaises Et n'oubliez pas que vous pouvez communiquer avec nous sur tous les sujets qui concernent les femmes. (Pas de mauvaise volonté, s'il vous plaît !)

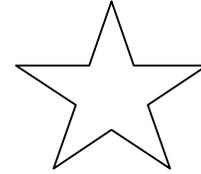
And – now for the English. Graham has asked me to write briefly about my recent appointment to the Conseil des Montréalaises. This is a consultative committee set up in May 2004 by the Ville de Montréal; it is made up of 15 women of varying ages, origins and occupations, appointed by City Hall. Our function is to advise the City Council on all problems concerning women and to encourage women to play a greater role in the public life of Montreal.

We recently published a report in 2 volumes: one on the situation confronting homeless or inadequately housed women in Montreal and one comprising our advice and recommendations. The print version of these documents is already available in French; an English version will be available on the Web site towards the end of February.

For more information concerning our activities, please consult our (bilingual) Web site at : ville.montreal.qc.ca/conseildesmontrealaises (I see it needs bringing up to date!) And please write or phone to express any concerns you may have on women's issues.

We are also very distressed to announce the passing of two other Concordians:

ATKINSON, IRENE 20060918
SWIFT THOMAS E. 20060909



I well remember Ton Swift, as I'm sure many of you do, because of the central role he played in our community. A gentleman. Unfortunately, I do not recall Irene Atkinson. Please tell us about her. If you have other information about departed Concordians or if you wish to pay homage to any of them, please write to us. The Newsletter belongs to you and we rely on your help.

The Executive

**A ROMANTIC OR JUST A PLEASANTLY FESTIVE EVENING AT HÉLÈNE
 DE CHAMPLAIN?**

We were wondering how many of you might be interested in just such an outing. A dinner at this charming historical restaurant with entertainment would probably cost about 55\$ per person. That might not include your alcoholic beverages. It would however be a great way to welcome the Spring and spend an evening in pleasant company. For the entertainment, we were thinking of approaching the Red Hot Mommas, whom you may already know. If you don't, that's a serious lack in your life!

To have our own room with the entertainment, we would need a large number of people. There is no point in our pursuing this unless we have some kind of guarantee that a significant number of our members and guests would be prepared to join the group.

If this idea tempts you, please e-mail or call our President, giving numbers and holiday plans, **BEFORE FEBRUARY 28**. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Executive.

À LA PROCHAINE!

SEE YOU SOON!