

# **CUPARUC CUPARUC CUPARUC**

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

**vol. 16, no 2, avril/april 2007**

## **President's Message**

Welcome to Spring – a time of renewal, reinvigoration and hope – and to most of us, an appreciation that we survived another winter (and to those of us still in Quebec, another interesting Quebec election!)

Not much happening on the Pension & Benefits front. The committees are still dragging their feet but the plan is doing well!! Ernest Haigh, our long time pension manager has retired and joined us as a recipient. Thanks Ernest for all your years of service to pensioners! Kim Kudo who has been doing an excellent job in the health/benefits area has replaced him and can be contacted at (514) 848-2424 Ext. 3861 or [kkudo@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:kkudo@alcor.concordia.ca)

Our Annual General meeting will be held on April 25 in room HB-130 at Loyola. On the social side, our “Sugaring Off” will be on April 12 and the Casino visit sometime in May. Unfortunately the response to the idea of Helen de Champlain and the “Red Hot Mamas” was not high enough to justify the event. We continue to welcome ideas for other social or other events – either here or elsewhere (what about a salmon “potlatch”(?) on the west coast?) – please just contact us.

Have a great Spring and better summer.

**Graham Martin, President**

## **Message du Président**

Le printemps est arrivé avec son lot d'espoirs et de renouvellements. Nous sommes nombreux à nous féliciter d'avoir survécu à un hiver de plus (sans compter les élections au Québec!)

Il ne se passe pas grand'chose du côté des Retraites et Bénéfices. Les comités trainent encore la patte mais le plan se porte bien !!! Ernest Haigh, qui a si longtemps géré notre fond de pension, a pris sa retraite et se trouve dorénavant parmi nous. Merci, Ernest, pour toutes ces années que vous nous avez consacrées. C'est Kimiko Kudo, qui s'est distinguée dans les services Santé, qui le remplace. Coordonnées : 514 848 2424 x3861 ou [kkudo@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:kkudo@alcor.concordia.ca).

Notre Assemblée Générale aura lieu le 25 avril en salle HB-130 sur le campus Loyola. Du côté des activités sociales, nous organisons notre partie de sucre pour le 12 avril et la visite au Casino pour le mois de mai. Hélas, l'idée de la sortie au restaurant Hélène de Champlain n'a pas suscité assez de réponses positives pour que nous poursuivions ce projet. Nous accueillons toujours vos suggestions pour des sorties ici ou ailleurs (un potlatch au saumon sur la Côte Ouest?); il suffit de communiquer avec nous.

Bon printemps, bon été,  
**Graham Martin, Président**

**The New Year where it should be : in the Spring! This beautiful text is from a colleague in the Education Department. (I'm envious !)**

If any of you drop in to see me on April 12, you are likely to be doused/drenched with water with yells of "Maha Thingyan! Maha Thingyan!" ("Happy Burmese New Year!", also called the Thingyan Water Festival).

I promise I won't throw a bucket of water or drown you with a water hose/pump as they usually do in the streets of Rangoon, capital of my homeland of Burma (now called Myanmar). I will merely sprinkle you with a bouquet of flowers drenched in a ceremonial silver bowl filled with scented water, to symbolize the traditional washing away of the old year. And then you will be offered a bowl of Mohinga: an aromatic fish soup served on rice noodles, as a special New Year treat.

The festival lasts 4 days: April 12 - 16 (which we share with neighbouring countries of South -East Asia practising Theravada Buddhism, particularly Thailand where it is called Songkran), and apart from the water-throwing at each street corner, there are parades of floats competing for decoration, costumes, singing, dancing, and the chanting of slogans meant both for jest as well as satire. Organizations and community groups team up on these floats for 4 days of competition around the city, and prizes are awarded on the last day of the festival.

This is the hottest part of the year (with temperatures climbing easily into the 40 degrees C ), so the water-throwing is encouraged as a welcome cooling -off. This is also the time when a beautiful tropical flower called the

Padauk blooms both in the gardens as well as in the headdress of Burmese women.

What a pity I won't be able to douse you with a bouquet of one of these!

Dr. V. Alex Sharma  
Associate Professor Emeritus of  
Education, Concordia University  
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### **Our next outing?**



### **Et un peu de Gérard de Nerval pour le mois d'avril ?**

Déjà les beaux jours, -- la poussière,  
Un ciel d'azur et de lumière,  
Les murs enflammés, les longs soirs;--  
Et rien de vert :-- à peine encore  
Un reflet rougeâtre décore  
Les grands arbres aux rameaux noirs !

Ce beau temps me pèse et m'ennuie.  
-- Ce n'est qu'après des jours de pluie  
Que doit surgir, en un tableau,  
Le printemps verdissant et rose,  
Comme une nymphe fraîche éclore,  
Qui, souriante, sort de l'eau.

**Our President is concerned about our health and offers us some laughter as medicine, the best there is.**

OLD FOLKS ARE WORTH A FORTUNE"

Old folks are worth a fortune: With silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a lot more social with the passing of the years; some might even call me a frivolous old gal. I'm seeing five gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Then Charley Horse comes along, and when he is here he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. (He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint). After such a busy day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed-with Ben Gay. What a life!!

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He said that at my age, I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him I do - all the time. No matter where I am - in the parlor, upstairs in the kitchen or down in the basement - I ask myself, " Now, what am I here after?"

Author: Unknown

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## **Retirement??? What is that all about?**

**By Barbara Harding**

**(Editor's Note : You may want to sit or lie down to read this!!! I know I did. For days after!)**

Many years ago, 1979 to be more precise, the Montreal Star folded. With a heavy heart, I went home and tried to adjust to the fact that I was now unemployed and I might as well learn to relax and take up a hobby. I volunteered at the local junior public school and began to teach a very engrossing subject, MACRAMÉ. This I thought will be my retirement, the end of my working career. Ha. Ha. Ha.

In early 1980, I began toiling at Concordia University. I became a member of what was then known as the 'Production Department' within Computing Services. Our function was to ensure the timely and proper execution of administrative applications. Our allowable margin of error was zero. An example that everyone will recognize, everyone received their paycheck on time.

Shortly after joining this group I was elevated to the supervisor position and I was totally engrossed in the tasks at hand.

Just around this time, the university began to look at desk top computing. A new sub-department was created within Computing Services and was named The Computer Store. It was my good fortune to be selected as a member of the newest group within Computing Services.

The "PC" and the "MAC" began to appear. The 'dumb terminal' connected to the 'mainframe', had met its match. With very little fanfare, Computing Services became deeply involved in the acquisition and installation of desk top computers. These new computers could function as a stand alone unit, and could also perform all the functions of the dumb terminals. These were exciting days. We were at the threshold of the modern office of today. Little did we realize back then just how extensive this explosion of technology would become! In the administrative offices the typewriter began to disappear. Secretaries, clerks and managers, all became proficient in the use of these newfangled toys. Word processors, Spreadsheets and Databases were popping up all over the place. Researchers also expanded their use of desktop computers. The demands for more powerful computers and even more sophisticated software

packages created a monster. An in depth review of our situation convinced us that or small group of three persons was overwhelmed with work and we had to develop a new plan.

To attempt to meet the needs of the university community the “in house computer store” would have to expand. This expansion would be a major expense for the university. More personnel, more office space, etc. The new plan called for the dissolution of the “in house computer store” and the creation of a partnership with an outside agency known as Central Microsystems. They had the manpower, expertise and outside world contacts to meet our needs. Central Microsystems also became the “on campus” store.

Well here I am again. The store has closed and I am without a job. Well, not quite

All this new technology changed the way the administrative functions of the university operated. Administrative offices no longer transcribed data to paper forms for “key punching”. The new desk top computers ‘aka terminals’ allowed them to “input” data directly to the main computer system. Editing of data was performed ‘live online’ allowing the ‘clients’ to also function more efficiently.

All this new technology also changed the way the “Production Department” interfaced with the administrative offices and a new highbred group evolved. The knowledge I gained in the development of the computer store, coupled with my knowledge of the “old” production systems placed me in the position of managing the “NEW” Production Department.

Another new department, another new job, another new boss. This was beginning to be rather interesting career history. Years pass quickly and in what seemed to be a very short time, I was faced with yet another challenge. THE RETIREMENT PACKAGE. I have always enjoyed working, and I was not really ready to throw in the towel. Fortunately for me, the Computer Department still required my expertise an offered to take me back on a contract for a period of time until systems that were in development could be completed and implemented. This was the better of two worlds. I could retire, and I could assist in the implementation of new system that eventually did away with the need for a Production Department. The task was completed, personnel were reassigned to new and challenging tasks, and I ALMOST retired.

With plenty of time on my hands, I started yet another career. No, I did not go back to macramé. A very good friend of mine had for some time tried to recruit me to become a “Fashion Co-coordinator” for Weekender women’s clothing. Looking for new adventure and challenges made my decision quite easy. This proved to be a wonderful decision as it provided something to occupy my abundance of available time, earn some pocket money, and expand my already wide network of new friends and acquaintances. The system operated on the same concept as the Tupperware party. I think that I enjoyed the social activities more than the sales aspect of this ‘work’.

All good things come to an end, and eventually I wanted more emphasis on the social life and less on the working aspects, so I ALMOST retired again. I closed the books on working and became fully immersed in not for profit behavior.

I was asked, and accepted to become, the president of The Saint Margaret of Scotland Guild. The Guild is a non profit social group that raises money for a number of charitable organizations. Throughout the year the Guild holds dances, food basket drives and bowl-a-thons, all profits go to food banks and other charities.

I also belong to a line dance club, and a clogging club. Clogging is a form of step dancing that can be described as a cross between tap dancing and river dance.

All this dancing means that I must stay in good physical and mental health, so I also belong to Curves.

I found that I still had some time on my hands so I looked around and found more things to do. I started a chapter of the RED HATS SOCIETY, an activity primarily for women over 50. I am the Queen Mother of the chapter and my mandate is to help the members to have a good time and enjoy themselves. This is our only unofficial bylaw. We wear outrageous red hats and purple attire. We go to the theatre, the casino and restaurants. We even had a float in the 2007 Saint

Patrick's Day Parade. Not wanting to be at loose ends with nothing to do I fill in some remaining time, I am affiliated with a travel agency. We organize cruises to the Caribbean and motor coach trips to Atlantic City.

Concordia has been a major part of my life and I still keep in contact with many colleagues through the pensioner's association and last but not least, I still work part time with the exams office during the exam periods.

As I leave the house each day and begin my activities I can sometimes hear a faint voice calling out to me. "Will you be back for supper, or shall I wait till breakfast tomorrow to see you again?" I recognize the voice and I recall seeing that person yesterday, so I quickly reply, "YES".

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### **More from our President. We shall expect such contributions in every Bulletin!**

#### Questions and answers about Canada

Now that Vancouver has won the chance to host the 2010 Winter Olympics, these are some questions people the world over are asking!!!!

Believe it or not these questions about Canada were posted on an International Tourism Website, obviously the answers are a joke; but the questions were really asked!!!!

Q: I have never seen it warm on Canadian TV, so how do the plants grow? (England)

A: We import all plants fully grown and then just sit around and watch them die.

Q: Will I be able to see Polar Bears in the street? (USA)

A: Depends on how much you've been drinking.

Q: I want to walk from Vancouver to Toronto; can I follow the railroad tracks? (Sweden)

A: Sure, it's only four thousand miles, take lots of water.

Q: Is it safe to run around in the bushes in Canada? (Sweden)

A: So it's true what they say about Swedes.

Q: It is imperative that I find the names and addresses of places to contact for a stuffed Beaver. (Italy)

A: Let's not touch this one.

Q: Are there any ATM's (cash machines) in Canada? Can you send me a list of them in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Halifax? (England)

A: What did your last slave die of?

Q: Can you give me some information about hippo racing in Canada?(USA)

A: A-Fri-ca is the big triangle shaped continent south of Europe. Ca-na-DA is that big country to your North...oh, forget it. Sure, the hippo racing is every Tuesday night in Calgary. Come naked.

Q: Which direction is North in Canada? (USA)

A: Face south and then turn 180 degrees . Contact us when you get here and we'll send the rest of the directions.

Q: Can I bring cutlery into Canada? (England)

A: Why? Just use your fingers like we do.

Q: Can you send me the Vienna Boys' Choir schedule? (USA)

A: Aus-tri-a is that quaint little country bordering Ger-man-y, which is...oh forget it. Sure, the Vienna Boys Choir plays every Tuesday night in Vancouver and in Calgary, straight after the hippo races. Now you come naked.

Q: Do you have perfume in Canada? (Germany)

A: No, We don't stink.

Q: I have developed a new product that is the fountain of youth. Can you sell it in Canada? (USA)

A: Anywhere significant numbers of Americans gather.

Q: Can you tell me the regions in British Columbia where the female population is smaller than the male population? (Italy)

A: Yes, gay nightclubs.

Q: Do you celebrate Thanksgiving in Canada? (USA)

A: Only at Thanksgiving.

Q: Are there supermarkets in Toronto and is milk available all year round? (Germany)

A: No, we are a peaceful civilization of Vegan hunter/gatherers. Milk is illegal.

Q: I have a question about a famous animal in Canada, but I forget its name. It 's a kind of big horse with horns. (USA)

A: It's called a Moose. They are tall and very violent, eating the brains of anyone walking close to them. You can scare them off by spraying yourself with human urine before you go out walking.

Q: Will I be able to speak English most places I go? (USA)

A: Yes, but you will have to learn it first.

Please send this on to any Canadian (or others) who you think will enjoy it as much as you and I have..

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## Des films à voir :

### 1. *La vie en rose* d'Olivier Dahan.

Il me semble que ce titre a été choisi pour plaire au public nord-américain car le titre d'origine est *La Môme*, surnom (La même Piaf) qui a marqué les débuts de la si renommée Édith Piaf. J'ai longuement hésité avant d'y aller, craignant d'être noyée sous le sentimentalisme dont trop de journalistes, etc., entourent son parcours. Mais ce film est magnifique. Il est ce qu'il est, la biographie d'une chanteuse que tous ou presque ont affectionnée et dont la vie est caractérisée par une série de pertes; il n'empêche que dans son genre il est remarquable, entre autres, par la justesse du ton,

Nous suivons *La Môme*, comme dit la bande annonce, de son enfance à la gloire, de ses victoires à ses blessures, de Belleville à New York. Abandonnée par sa mère, recueillie par une

grand-mère tenancière d'une maison close, propulsée comme enfant-chanteuse par son père contorsionniste de cirque, découverte par le gérant de cabaret Louis Leplée (Gérard Depardieu) avant que celui-ci ne soit assassiné, se perfectionnant dans son art avec le compositeur Raymond Asso (Marc Barbé), traversant la guerre et des coups du sort du destin comme la mort dans un accident d'avion de son grand amour, le champion du monde (middleweight) de la boxe, Marcel Cerdan (Jean-Pierre Martins.) Vous aurez reconnu ici le nom d'un certain nombre de grands comédiens français mais c'est le jeu de Marion Cotillard dans le rôle de Piaf qui épate et qui éblouit, tellement elle incarne son personnage. À ne pas y croire !

Rien n'est romancé, ni les terribles conditions de vie dans le Belleville de sa première enfance, ni celles du bordel normand où elle a grandi (l'on pense à «La maison Tellier» de Guy de Maupassant)), ni dans ses tournées avec ce père contorsionniste, ni ses premières tentatives de chanteuse de rue à Paris. Le souci du détail et du vraisemblable est à admirer, comme la musique, les quelques décors fastueux, l'hôtel particulier à Grasse où elle dépérit (morte à l'âge de 48 ans.)

Pour ceux et celles qui sont en âge d'avoir suivi tant soit peu sa carrière, ce film éveille bien des souvenirs et des émotions; d'autres apprendront à connaître cette personnalité célèbre et l'époque qu'elle a marquée; d'autres encore ou peut-être les mêmes se laisseront aller au plaisir esthétique que distille *La vie en rose*. C'est un film pour tous les publics.

M.V.

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## **The Gambler (Editor's note : with a welcome tribute to Fred Sauer)**

**By Alex Sengbush**

You're dealt a hand! You can fold it or you can hold it and hang on to the next round. Well, life's like that, at least for me....

So I was reading the newspaper, the Montreal Star no less. The Saturday edition was especially good and normally I read the comics first.

But not this time - the page opened at the career section and there it was: "Loyola College - looking for Computer Operations Supervisor".

Wow! I'm thinking - this is me - this job has my name on it. I check the date on top of the page, it's August 1968.



Montreal had just hosted Expo 67, the greatest show on earth that put it on the map, it's on top of the world - and so am I, a seasoned professional in the new field of computer technology. The time of Univac, Honeywell, mainframe computers was upon us.

I'm thinking about his job, yes this is me! After all, I am immensely qualified,

with two years of computer processing experience under my belt - and just in my mid-twenties.

I never had a job I did not like and so far had gotten each job I applied for! So I applied, and waited. What? No immediate reply! I called human resources: "So glad you called us, we misplaced your application, please come in right away!"

Ok, lesson learned - you want something, you go for it.

Loyola made me an offer I could not refuse, free tuition and all and I was ready to enter the world of institutional computing or data processing as it was called at that time.



It's my first day on the job. I enter the Data Processing area, a converted classroom, with anticipation and then it hit me: Where was the computer? I look around - there was no computer, nothing, nada!

The equipment in the area was, as I later learned 'unit record' equipment like a sorter, a merger with wire panels etc. for punched cards.

But no computer...what a bummer, not groovy! OK. Let's see, I had already met

some key people like Gerry Castleman (D.P. Manager) and Peter (today still active as website manager) - who were running the show on the admin side and Dr. West and Roger, who were on the academic side of things.

Dr. West talked about waiting for a grant to get the computer! What does that mean? Patiently waiting for the funds from the powers that be. Now what? In my world, companies would just go out and buy what they needed.

Apparently not so here.

As a gambler I had invited myself to the table. The cards were already dealt. I picked up my hand and but the house came up short...should I hold, should I fold...?

Quick assessment! What to trade for a delay in technology. Let me count the cards, I mean ways:

A nice, tree lined west-end campus, free parking, free tuition, promise of great computer power sometime in the future, and there were, and I mean that sincerely, a bunch of a nice people! Stuff to think about - so I decided to return after my first coffee break - and hold my cards.

Let the game begin. Next round - their hand, I'm still holding. Time to learn about the admin business. Never warmed up to the ancient equipment don't know how these guys did it. Maybe Peter could write about that!

Finally the new Univac computer arrives - new game, new round, my hand looks good. I know the Univac 9200 series better than anyone - it's my hand, I win.

Our Computer Centre is processing jobs as never before. Right or wrong we can process data like never before for our administrative customers like Vera Baily, John Noonan and Tom Murphy and George Frain from the day division and Doreen Bates and Doug Potvin from the Evening Division, and the special ASC reports for Dean Jolly.

I'm taking another look at the 'wrong' stuff. Are we producing some useless reports? There is no excuse for that. I'm using me free tuition and enroll in all

"Systems Analysis" courses that Loyola offered.

Bingo! Not a poker expression but it says it all. I'm now looking after the systems side of administrative student records - I begin to realize that systems analysis is my calling.

In the meantime Peter takes full charge of Payroll and the General Ledger. The dies are cast.

Gerry, our manager, a great guy, has made two great decisions! He does not realize it yet, but he just lost his hand. Peter and I are now running the show - poker it is!

And so it goes, things were running smoothly when all of a sudden, revolt, riot, student unrest! Punched cards were flying out of the windows....at Sir George University...not at Loyola. After all the Computer Centre keys were safely in my pocket!

But the Loyola students barricaded the rector's office... from the inside! Seems they just wanted to smoke something in peace. This was a defining moment for the character of these two institutions.

Next, hand after hand played and all is well. I discover that working in a University setting there is some repetition. One year experience and many years of repetition but there is an opportunity to improve each process year after year. The card game is still going strong and I get winning hands.

Then suddenly, at least for the uninitiated, the merger: Loyola would be acquired by Sir George, in corporate parlance and that's the way I saw it. They had a solid computerized student system in place! Time to reshuffle the cards and assess the new situation.

Ah, a weak area, Students Accounts Receivables, seemingly untouched by any computer system. I am holding the high cards for this round. After all at Loyola we had fully analyzed and computerized the Student Accounts and it worked like a charm.

It was just a question to get Fred Sauer on board. It did not take long. Fred appreciated all the systems help he could get

and I was appreciative of the new area to conquer.

We, Fred and I conspired to allow him to access the student accounts online... a first at that time.

Then one day Fred said : "I'm retiring". A great day for him.

The gambler assesses the situation...any plays left at this table? It's not the same without Fred. Hey Fred thanks...it's been a great run.

So I read the newspaper, the Montreal Star as always. The Saturday edition was especially good and now I usually read about politics.

But not this time - the page opened at the career section and there it was: "Major

Financial Trust Company, looking for Financial Systems Analyst - location Toronto."

Wow! I'm thinking - this is me - this job has my name on it. I check the date on top of the page, it's August 1982.

The current game lasted 14 years, time to change the tables. I recognize a good hand when I see one...know when to hold them, know when to fold them.

And now I'm coming back to cash in my chips at Concordia...ah, the right pension choice paid off, and this is how I became a member of CUPA.

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**Films à voir 2. *Le Caïman* de Nanni Moretti, selection officielle italienne, Festival de Cannes, 2006.**

*Nous voilà dans le cinema italien; Ce film passe actuellement à Montréal, version sous-titrée en anglais et en français.*

Nous sommes allées à deux voir ce film et nous en sommes sorties à la fin parfaitement glacées, émues jusqu'à la moëlle (et au cerveau) par le portrait que nous offre Moretti de la chasse au pouvoir.

Nanni Moretti est un cinéaste engagé qui n'a jamais eu peur de dire, à travers ses films, ce qu'il pensait, quel qu'ait pu être le prix à payer. Il crée ici un producteur de films de série B, Bruno, qui a connu un succès mitigé autrefois, mais qui se trouve au commencement de la narration en faillite totale professionnellement et familialement puisque sa femme veut divorcer. Térésa, une jeune cinéaste, vient lui proposer un scénario qu'il accepte tout de suite pour s'apercevoir ensuite, avec effroi, que c'est une biographie de Berlusconi. Les ennuis se succèdent : les banques refusent l'argent, les acteurs se rétractent. Mais la ténacité de Térésa va insuffler à Bruno une énergie nouvelle, et le film clôt ou presque sur une scène terrible où l'on voit la silhouette de Berlusconi, prononcé coupable par la justice, se découper sur fond de flammes et les cris du peuple qu'il a manipulé et qui le defend encore.

Le film paraît centré sur Bruno et ses problèmes affectifs ou professionnels mais, par le film dans le film, on voit des archives sur Berlusconi, ses invectives au parlement européen, ses démêlés avec les magistrats. S'y ajoutent des scènes qui montrent combien le personnage a su endormir le peuple italien (où l'homme politique est joué par trois acteurs différents, comme pour dire qu'il s'agit d'un dictateur parmi d'autres.) Bruno, qui avoue avoir voté Berlusconi, va prendre de plus en plus conscience de ce qui se passé dans la réalité, grâce à Térésa beaucoup plus politisée que lui. Il est évident que Moretti cherche à éveiller le peuple italien puisque ce film sort peu de temps avant les élections italiennes de 2006 (avec le résultat que l'on sait !)

Nous sommes confrontés donc à une étude du pouvoir et de la facilité avec

laquelle on peut manipuler l'électorat, le peuple dans son ensemble. Ce film ne porte pas sur Berlusconi; il porte sur toutes les personnalités politiques qui ne reculent devant rien pour arriver au pouvoir : Duplessis, Mussolini, Hitler, Berlusconi, j'arrête, mais vous pouvez tous et toutes penser à d'autres, et il faut bien comprendre que ces dictateurs effrayants, comme d'autres ailleurs, ont toujours été démocratiquement élus par des gens qui se sont tranquillement laissés bernés!

**Empruntez au moins le DVD avant les prochaines élections !**

(P.S. Si vous cherchez ce film sous la rubrique «Cinéma», vous verrez qu'il s'agit d'une comédie !)

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### **The Circular Path in my Life by Lewis J. Poteet**

Before our recent wave of aging as a time of fitness, sexuality, and even continuing work for seniors, the received wisdom was that the beginning of life and the last years were similar, more emotional and possibly foolishness, dependency, frailty. As I muse over what I have done since retirement in 1999, I see a remarkable set of such circular patterns.

For several years, I was at loose ends, surprised that my prolific production of slang books—fun and hopeful attempts to please chair and dean—had seemed to expire. I did have one six-month job doing the Canadian entries for the new Partridge Dictionary of Slang, but not much else of any writing.

Then, on visits to my father, nearing his death in his early 90s, I found Austin (TX) Community College, where he, my older son, and my two brothers lived, needed instructors for eight-week terms in the winters. So for several years, I signed on. I was teaching Freshman Composition, just as I had in my graduate school teaching assistant days. It was less than inspiring, though, after the heady and somewhat grandiose notion that my prime was spent tracing the roots of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Victorian period, studying the interface of technology and the human being, and so forth. So when Dad passed on, I signed off.

Then an acquaintance mentioned that Discount Auto Rentals needed drivers to ferry cars around the Montreal area, preferred older drivers, and would accept very flexible schedules. I tried it, and again to my surprise, I found it challenging and enjoyable. I have always liked driving, and in fact my first job, to make money for college, was driving a van for an insurance company in Dallas. Later I drove the wheat harvest from the Texas panhandle to Montana one summer. Here and now, I found that the teams of drivers were a fascinating, humorous lot, mostly men, with occasionally a tough, foul-mouthed woman. The camaraderie was wonderful. And though I hate traffic and driving in downtown underground parking garages, not to mention getting up at 5 a.m. on working days, I still enjoyed the change. It was quite a comedown from working in a university department—I used to say that department meetings were like being in a room full of vice-presidents, given our egos. So this change was tonic for me. And it was another circle. I have learned a lot about the city, many new shortcuts, and the language is a feast: often three of the five drivers speak Spanish, and all are helpful to the newcomer.

I do not work more than a day or two a week, but it is often an eight-to-ten hour stint. I have taken up tennis again, so I reserve some days for practice and lessons. I am not in it for the money, thanks to Howard Fink and the pension-writing committee, but it is good to be back in a loop and feel useful.

Now I just have to go further back, to when, at age 13, I was a boy preacher. If I could become one of those US evangelical stars, I could become rich, travel a lot, and perhaps practice the laying on of hands with some of the daughters of Zion. Who knows?

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### **Films à voir 3. *Indigènes*, film algérien par Rachid Bouchareb avec Sami Bouajila, Sami Naceri, Jamel Debbouze, Raschoy Zens.**

Les pays colonisateurs savent bien se servir de leurs peuples colonisés et Bouchareb nous révèle ici, à travers quatre, voire cinq, personnages précis, le sort des 130 000 «indigènes» (pour la plupart des Maghrebins) qui, en 1943, s'engagent dans l'armée française (celle de la République Provisoire à Londres) pour libérer la «mère patrie» de l'ennemi nazi.

Ils n'avaient encore jamais foulé le sol français, mais, si certains sont partis parce que les autorités françaises leur ont promis de sortir leurs familles de la misère, ou parce que la vie militaire les tentait, la majorité d'entre eux se sentaient obligés, l'on se demande pourquoi, de défendre la France parce qu'ils croyaient aux valeurs de la République : Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité. Ces héros que l'histoire avait oubliés vaincront en Italie, en Provence, et dans les Vosges, avant de se retrouver seuls à défendre un village alsacien contre un bataillon allemand.

Malgré l'imbécillité de certains officiers, peu soucieux de ces «indigènes», qui ordonnaient l'attaque alors que les Allemands occupaient le terrain, malgré le racisme quotidien dont ils ont été l'objet, malgré les très nombreux morts et blessés, ces soldats ont persisté, se sont distingués et ont permis à l'armée franco-française d'avancer. Leurs exploits ont été effacés de la version officielle; seuls les «vrais» Français étaient responsables de toute victoire. Pire encore, il a fallu attendre l'an 2006 et la sortie de ce film pour que, enfin, les survivants puissent toucher la pension à laquelle ils avaient droit (le même montant que celui accordé aux anciens combattants «pure laine» et qu'on leur a refusé pendant plus d'un demi-siècle.

Les acteurs ici aussi sont remarquables; la réalisation très belle. Le film est sobre, mais fort émouvant. Les scènes de guerre reproduites avec minutie. Il est aussi très attachant, parce que l'on s'identifie à ces jeunes gens, qui portent tant d'espoir, qui vivent l'amour, qui sont victimisés par la bureaucratie militaire comme par leurs officiers, mais chaleureusement accueillis par bien des civils. Beau commentaire sur l'armée !

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#### **Éditorial**

Je suis toujours aussi fascinée par cette idée d'un éditorial parce que je ne sais toujours pas ce que je suis censée y mettre ! Il est vrai cette fois-ci que les excuses s'imposent puisque, dans le dernier bulletin, ne figuraient ni le rapport de John Hall (nos deux ordinateurs étaient fâchés l'un avec l'autre) ni le compte rendu de la visite de Indiana Jones durant l'Assemblée générale. La conférence de ce professeur anthropologue du Collège John Abbott fut à la fois drôle et instructive; nous qui étions présents sommes maintenant plus

#### **Another Editorial**

Well, it's not quite a blank page but it still has to be filled up! Apologies first. John Hall's computer and mine were not on speaking terms so his report from last October did not get included in the latest issue of the Newsletter. Sorry, John. Nor did my account of our visit from Indiana Jones, professor of anthropology from John Abbott College. He was both entertaining and instructive and those of us who were there are now quite capable of identifying any of Concordia's closet skeletons that you care to bring us. So, go ahead. There surely are some...

que capables d'identifier tous les squelettes encore à déterrer à Concordia. – et il y en a sûrement !

Par ailleurs, je tiens à remercier toutes les personnes qui ont contribué à ce numéro. J'en apprends des choses sur les anciens collègues. Lewis Poteet, par exemple, comptait parmi mes amis, sinon intimes, au moins proches, mais ses activités depuis son départ à la retraite m'étaient absolument inconnues.

Je constate tristement que seul Alex Sharma a saisi l'occasion de nous parler de la façon dont il fête le Nouvel An. Et les Sikhs ? Rien à dire ? Allez, que tout le monde fasse un petit effort la prochaine fois.

Merci encore à tous et à toutes.

Mais où sont les francophones ? Françoise Ligier et Bérengère Gaudet ont eu l'amabilité d'écrire pour nous des recensions de livre fort intéressantes; celle fois-ci elles en ont été empêchées. Mais si les deux dames et moi sommes les seules à nous intéresser à des activités qui demandent le français, on peut aussi bien aller déjeuner ensemble de temps en temps et parler livres ou cinéma en mangeant un bon repas. Allez! Place au français !

Nous avons vécu nos élections; il y en a un peu partout dans le monde en ce moment; celles qui auront lieu en France inquiètent plus qu'elles ne rassurent. Il faudra voir si là comme ailleurs, au Québec par exemple, les craintes seront justifiées. Au moins cela nous empêche de nous endormir.

Et n'oubliez pas (vade retro, Alzheimer) que nous aurons le très grand plaisir d'écouter Dr Dolly Dastoor à notre prochaine Assemblée.

À bientôt, Maïr

I should like to thank all those who contributed to this issue. It makes very interesting reading and we are all learning many fascinating things about colleagues and friends. Lewis's description of his unlikely activities is captivating and I certainly wasn't aware of them.

It was disappointing to receive only one submission concerning the various festivities we all experience. Many thanks to Alex who certainly describes his well and makes us wish we were there. But where are the Sikhs? And all the others. What did you eat for Easter? Did you fast beforehand? Who paraded through the streets? It seems that this year, Eastern and Western Churches (ie Christian) celebrated at the same time. And, did anyone go to Jerusalem? Do follow Alex's example and write in.

Our French-speaking colleagues are belying their reputation for volubility so do encourage those who are in your entourage.

The Quebec elections are behind us (for how long?); the federal elections are looming (how else to explain all the handouts?); the French presidential elections have only a few days to go and are really creating a psychosis this time round (warranted...); in many other parts of the world elections are taking place. We all seem to spend a lot of time campaigning and voting. Where are the results???

Above all, in the immediate future, try very hard not to forget that Dr Dolly Dastoor (a truly excellent speaker) will be at our April 25 General Assembly to talk to us about (oh, my goodness. I've forgotten the subject!!!!)

See you soon, Maïr/Polly

