

# SOCIETY PAGES



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## Chapter One - A Curious Place

“Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!” said the Rabbit, taking a watch out of his waistcoat-pocket. Alice started to her feet and, burning with curiosity, ran after him through the city streets towards an imposing stone building. The building had peculiar traces of sawed-off prison bars in its windows. “How curious!” she thought.

The first thing Alice noticed upon entering was a group of bald-faced dowdies and frumps pontificating among each other in the corner. “How insufferably dull they all seem,” thought Alice.

Far more interesting were the portraits on the olive green walls. This queer-looking party of bearded faces stared down at her. Above them reigned the king of all portraits: Joseph Morrin, MD, esq., sitting stoically in full colour and gazing into the future for posterity.

“What do we have here,” said a faded portrait of Cyrille Tessier, esq. in a round mahogany frame. “A little girl! What are you looking for, little girl?”

“Would you kindly tell me,” said Alice, a little timidly, “where the White Rabbit skittered off to?”

Major Petry’s portrait changed from its regular charcoal calm to a impatient sanguine red: “The rabbit, she says! I believe he passed through that curtain into the library.”

The frumpies and dowdies turned towards Alice, as if to scold her. “Oh dear,” she thought as she ran up the staircase to the right. She escaped by pulling a makeshift curtain before a pair of imposing doors. The doors creaked open and Alice walked through into a large library, quiet aside from a ticking clock suspended from a balcony.



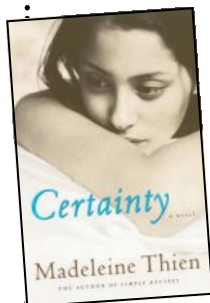
*To be continued...*

# LIBRARY REOPENS!

SATURDAY  
JULY 8  
12:00 PM

also

READING BY  
**MADELEINE THIEN**  
AUTHOR OF *CERTAINTY*



"The austere grace and polished assurance of her prose [is] remarkable." -  
-*New York Times*  
Book Review

8:00 PM

## LIBRARY HOURS

SUN	1:00PM-4:00PM
MON	CLOSED
TUES	12:00PM-9:00PM
WED	12:00PM-4:00PM
THURS	12:00PM-4:00PM
FRI	12:00PM-4:00PM
SAT	10:00AM-4:00PM

INAUGURATION OF

# MORRIN CENTRE

SEP 1 2006

Followed by  
**CELTIC FESTIVAL**  
SEP 2-3 2006

EDITOR & DESIGN  
PATRICK DONOVAN  
[patrickdonovan@morrin.org](mailto:patrickdonovan@morrin.org)

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members and friends,

A strong sense of anticipation rings through the temporary offices of the Society as the major construction work of the first phase of the restoration of the Morrin Centre building draws to a conclusion. In a few short weeks, the rejuvenated rooms of the library will be ready to receive the books and members that had taken a temporary leave of absence and left the shelves bare for the first time in close to 140 years.

While retaining all their former serenity and grace, the library rooms, college hall, and all other parts of the new building will be fresh, safe, and in conformity with current building code standards.

At the same time, fundraising efforts have been moving ahead strongly. A very positive feasibility study and extensive preparatory work has been completed by the professionals at KCI Canada, our fundraising consultants, and by the members of our steering committee for the launch of our major Capital Campaign.

Furthermore, the *maireesse* of Quebec, Mme. Andrée Boucher, accompanied by executive committee member and longtime friend of the community M. Ralph Mercier, paid a visit to the building and toured the dusty construction site with great enthusiasm. Also in attendance for the visit was M. Dennis Apedaile, grandson of former LHSQ president Major WH Petry, and the personification of the Calgary delegation. The Society, the *maireesse*, and Mr. Apedaile are all working hard to make the Morrin Centre project the beneficiary of a 400th anniversary legacy gift to Quebec from its sister city.

It is a time of great excitement, great challenges and new beginnings and I invite you all to visit the library after its reopening on July 8th.

We are awaiting news from the provincial and federal governments about our funding applications for the second phase of the restoration project.

Thank you for your continued support.

David F. Blair, President

# LIBRARY RE☀PENS!



## NEW AT THE LIBRARY by Sonja Taylor

### BOOK QUEST

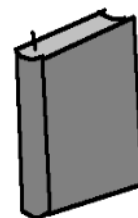
Sign your children up for the LHSQ Book Quest (croque livre) during the summer holidays. The book quest starts with an overall introduction on July 9 at the LHSQ library and is aimed at children between 5-7 and 8-10. Participants have to read 4 new books from our library and successfully answer short questions on the books in order to enter the draw to win great prizes. On September 9 they are invited to a special pirate's party at the library where the winners will be drawn and children should dress up as pirates. The Book Quest is free of charge and open to members and non-members. ■

### BOOK TALK

Welcome book lovers! We are starting a new literature group this summer. This new "Book Talk"-group will meet every third Wednesday of the month from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the library. Come to this new literary group and share your passion about your favorite books and authors in an open and legère atmosphere. Please note that this is not a book club where certain books are required to be read. The first meeting will be on July 12 and the theme will be "India". Further steps and themes will be discussed in that meeting. ■

### CHILDREN'S READINGS

On Saturday, July 15 at 1 p.m. we will start our new reading group for children at the library. All children are invited to come and listen to fantastic stories in English. These Kids' Readings will take place every Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m. at the LHSQ library and they are open for members and non-members free of charge. Parents are requested to be present at all times. For any changes in the schedule go to our website at [www.morrin.org](http://www.morrin.org). ■



***Congratulations***  
*on the re-opening of the Library of the*  
*Literary and Historical Society of Quebec,*  
*North America's oldest learned society,*  
*from North America's oldest newspaper, the*  
*Quebec*  
***Chronicle-Telegraph***  
*Many happy "returns"!*

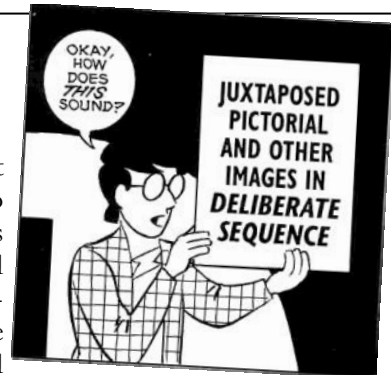
# LIBRARY RE☀OPENS!

## NEW COMICS/GRAPHIC NOVEL COLLECTION

by Patrick Donovan

This summer, the LHSQ proudly launches its graphic novel collection. Comics have come a long way in the last few decades. For many years, they were largely geared at adolescents and featured formulaic stories about muscular vigilantes in colourful tights. A few titles stretched the superhero genre's potential such as Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* and Bill Sienkiewicz's *Arkham Asylum*. During the 1980s, Art Spiegelman swept up the Pulitzer prize for his intelligent depiction of the holocaust in the graphic novel *Maus*, proving that the medium could be used for serious subjects. History was also brought to life through the graphic novel *Louis Riel*, by Canada's Chester Brown. Graphic novels have also frequently been used to showcase slice-of-life dramas, such as Daniel Clowes' *Ghost World* (later adapted to a movie starring Scarlett Johansson), Joe Matt's *The Poor Bastard*, and Paul Rabagliati's *Paul Has a*

*Summer Job*. Let's not forget cartoonists who have tackled serious contemporary political issues: Maltese-American cartoonist Joe Sacco took on Israel and Bosnia in his political travelogues *Palestine* and *War's End*, while Quebec's own Guy Delisle describes life in the bleak capital of North Korea in *Pyongyang*. If the genre still baffles you, Scott MacLeod's *Understanding Comics* is a fascinating essay on the medium that explores its history, appeal and potential.



All the graphic novels mentioned above are available in our collection. Pick one up this summer and enjoy! ■

## CROW LAKE a book review by Miriam Blair

*Crow Lake*, by Mary Lawson

This is the intensely moving story of a family with four young children that suffers a sudden tragic loss, how they react to it and how it affects their relationships to each other. The setting is a small, closely knit, remote Northern Ontario farming community, where the neighbours and family are portrayed with great tenderness. The land itself and the natural world are vividly brought to life through the passionate interest in it of one of the brothers and sisters, Matt and Kate. It is Kate who tells the story in a series of flashbacks which make the book un-put-down-able. I have read this book twice, the first time almost in one sitting, the second more slowly, in order to relish the beautiful writing and to appreciate the honest and believable way the characters were portrayed.

*Crow Lake* was chosen by the New York Times and the Washington Post as a book of the year. ■



## Wish List

### SUMMER 2006 PRIORITY: BOOKER PRIZE WINNERS GRAPHIC NOVELS

We are still working on completing our Booker Prize collection. Thank you to **Mary-Ellen Rooney** for donating 11 prize winners and **Barbara Salomon de Friedberg** for donating one. A \$200 donation would enable us to purchase the missing volumes and to have a complete collection of Booker winners. The missing volumes are:

- 1989 *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro
- 1980 *Rites of Passage* by William Golding
- 1977 *Staying On* by Paul Scott
- 1976 *Saville* by David Storey
- 1974 *Holiday* by Stanley Middleton
- 1973 *The Siege of Krishnapur* by J.G. Farrell
- 1972 *G* by John Berger
- 1970 *The Elected Member* by Bernice Rubens

All members are acknowledged for their donations on the inside front cover of our books. We are also looking for **graphic novels** of all kinds to help build our collection. Please talk to our librarian about any potential donation. Thank you.



# LIBRARY REPENS!

## COLLECTION ASSESSMENT & REOPENING by Patrick Donovan

When the library was emptied out for our move, the books weren't simply tossed in a corner and forgotten. Significant work has taken place. The collection will return to the library looking healthier than ever.

### Defining Orientations

The Canadiana Committee, made up of volunteers and staff, examined the collection and presented a report to council in January 2005. This reflection included many ideas about the condition and development of the collection as a whole. There were different schools of thought on the role of the LHSQ library: some believed collections for researchers should be developed and others thought the library should be retained as an atmospheric ruin full of old books. Most people believed the library needed to provide a useful service to the broadest range of people. The Canadiana Committee report recommended that the LHSQ should operate "a general-interest English-language library" with a mandate closer to that of a public library than an academic one. This would allow the LHSQ library to fill a niche in the city's network of libraries. Researchers could be referred to the many larger institutions capable of meeting their needs. Nevertheless, the conservation of older collections and interpretation strategies to evoke the Society's 180-year old history were also deemed important.

### Collection Assessment

Having completed the move to our temporary offices, LHSQ staff started opening up boxes in June 2005 to begin a thorough assessment of the collection. The main objective was to present our book collection in a compelling and user-friendly way for our reopening, thereby increasing book usage. This work allowed us to simplify the reshelving process and to support the development of our computerized database. Each book was examined, assessed, and sorted. The dust of several decades was vacuumed away.

### Special Collections

Assessment led to reorganisation of collections. Instead of the numerous separate sections that existed in the library before, we will now have two: a circulating **General Collection** and a non-circulating **Special Collection**. The latter is made up of special-interest and valuable books, many of which have not circulated in years but are compatible with our mandate. The Special

Collection includes older books on Canadian and British Empire history, Victorian curiosities, as well as an impressive collection containing many older travel narratives.

### Weeding, Book Fair and Book Auction

Almost no weeding has been done in the LHSQ's collection over the past 40 years. Many academic textbooks and reference works containing obsolete or superseded information were found. Books that had not been borrowed in the last twenty years were set aside if they did not meet Special Collections criteria. Many others were literally falling apart at the seams or had strains of latent, and potentially harmful, mildew. In March 2006, the LHSQ Council authorized these books, which made up approximately 30% of our collection, to be weeded. Many of these were on display at our book fair in April, which brought in 200 visitors and \$1250. LHSQ member and retired librarian Gerard Morin had helped us separate potentially valuable books from those that had little value, and the fact that antiquarian booksellers walked away empty-handed from our book fair is testimony to a job well done. Books remaining after the fair were donated to Toxi-Aide and Ozanam and will be available for sale at their thrift shops in Quebec City. The more valuable books will be auctioned away at a silent auction this autumn.

### Computerization

The library purchased new collection management software in 2005: *Gestion virtuelle*, by GCI. This will soon replace the card catalogue and facilitate research and acquisitions. Numerous volunteers worked on data entry, typing information from the handwritten shelf list into this electronic format. Through this exercise, we realized that many of the books in our collection were not accounted for in the shelf list. This will delay access to our computer catalogue until an inventory is completed.

### Work Continues

Although the library will be in better shape than it has been for years, raising the standard of the collection is an ongoing process. A formal collections development policy will be developed, gaps filled, additional weeding undertaken, rebinding of books in the special collections, recataloguing according to current DDC system standards, etc. ■

# UPDATE FROM THE MORRIN CENTRE PROJECT TEAM

A PAGE DEVOTED TO INFORMING MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE PROJECT AND OUR PROGRESS

## NEWS ABOUT THE STAFF

**Nadia Cusan** started working for us in March as an administrative assistant. Originally from Quebec City, Nadia worked at the CHUL for several years and ran a home day care centre.

**Anne-Frederique Champoux** joined us in May to work at the library through a Young Canada Works grant. You are sure to see her charming smile in the library, as she will be replacing Caroline Lamothe at the desk this summer.

**Caroline Lamothe** will become a new mother in early January 2007. She will be on preventative withdrawal for most of the summer, since the move and restoration imposes tasks that are considered risk factors for pregnant women. She will be back in the fall doing library management until her maternity leave.

Other summer students have also joined us on Young Canada Works and HRSDC grants. **Julie Lamontagne** will be assisting Sonja on events. **Jacqueline Rohel** and **Tom Welham** will work on research and educational projects. They are now wrapping up their project on tea and transcontinental trade.

The LHSQ is proud to be a participant in the VEQ Mentoring Pilot Project 2006, which aims at providing English-language/bilingual internships within Quebec City for CEGEP Champlain – St. Lawrence Business Programme Students. Our intern for this first year was **Pierre-Olivier Guay**, who helped Samar promote rentals and commercial activities from March to May.

Two young full-time volunteers from the Katimavik programme have been working with us on library collection assessment and move preparation since March: **Alyssa Filipowich** from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and **Lydia Bueller** from Winkler, Manitoba. The entire Katimavik team was very helpful during our book fair and packed the books for us afterwards in record speed.

## FUNDRAISING

LHSQ fundraising efforts are still underway on different levels. Firstly, the New Beginnings campaign was concluded with a cocktail party held at David F. Blair's home. Most of our donors attended the event, and we thank them again for their contribution. Secondly,

donations and pledges keep pouring in from members and friends of the Society, whom we like to call our Patrons. We thank them for the \$3,715 they have donated since February 2006. Finally, the feasibility study conducted by KCI is almost concluded with 30 to 35 opinion leaders interviewed. The LHSQ should receive the final report very soon.

## RENTALS

The Morrin Centre spaces are already quite solicited for 2007. Various organizations from Quebec City are planning their fundraising dinners and annual events with us, while weddings are already booked for clients from the United States. The *Théâtre Petit Champlain* has been in contact with the Society for a partnership to support of a young artist who writes and composes English songs, so keep your eyes and ears open! Other partnerships are getting stronger: the Saint-Amour catered our New Beginnings donor recognition event, while the Chateau Frontenac sales team treated themselves to a hard hat tour of the Morrin Centre to get more acquainted with the rooms and possibilities.

## EVENTS

Lots of members and newcomers came to our events in winter/spring 2006. Our new series of political discussions called "In Focus" led by Barry Lane proved to be a great success during spring 2006. Members and non-members came to Kirk Hall for these events and actively participated in the discussions. All our presenters did a wonderful job. The group will continue to meet as of September 2006.

Another great highlight were our first two events for Black History Month in February at University Laval. Thank you to all who came and supported these important events.

Thank you also to Meb Reisner for taking all poetry workshop participants on a wonderful poetic journey to explore the "Pilgrim Soul" this spring.

Exciting events will be taking place over the next few months. Madeleine Thien, who recently moved to Quebec City from Vancouver, will be reading from her new novel on July 8. Her first book was a Commonwealth Writers' Prize finalist for Best First Book, and was named a notable book by the Kiriyaama Pacific Rim Book Prize. An event not to miss! ■

# RESTORATION PROJECT: PHASE I DEMYSTIFIED

by Patrick Donovan

The first phase of our restoration project is almost complete. It involved lots of invasive work in the building. Fire safety and accessibility measures are being implemented, a secondary staircase has been added and an elevator will soon complete this. The building was completely upgraded with new electrical, audio-visual,



Installing the sprinkler system

plumbing, and security systems. Restoring a 200-year old building with four-foot thick stone walls is a complex exercise. Some of the new sprinkler system pipes are nearly a foot in diameter. Grooves must be cut and plastered over when completed. Figuring out where to put these new systems was a real puzzle. Nevertheless, this work will ensure that the site can be preserved for future generations and welcome the public comfortably and safely.

The first phase also involved important work on three areas in the building: The Hall of Presidents and library will open in July, while the Morrin College hall will follow in September.

## HALL OF PRESIDENTS

The Morrin Centre housed a prison from 1813 to 1868. The hall was originally divided into a series of rooms including the turnkey's room, prison guard's room, two vestibules and passageways. The space was opened up following conversion to a college in 1868, creating the current elegant vestibule with its side staircases. After Morrin College closed in the early 1900s, the Society took over the space in 1910 to hang portraits of former presidents. The green canvas wall covering probably dates from this period.

Since we are retaining these portraits, the early 20th century was used as the main reference for this space. The colours of the hall correspond to this period. We went back to the original shade of olive green, which had become turquoise over time. Improved lighting fixtures will be set up, including two ornate hanging lamps. The portraits will be displayed again in this room.

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## LIBRARY ROOMS

The LHSQ initially occupied solely the vaulted reading room in 1868. It expanded into the adjacent room in 1904. Although fluorescent light fixtures and pink carpeting were added over the years, the library never lost its significant Victorian aura.

The primary reference for library restoration is late Victorian eclecticism. Light shades of olive green used in the Victorian era were chosen for the walls. Simple institutional cream curtains and occasional folding wooden shutters were added to the windows. The wooden floor was stained and varnished, with rugs were thrown down as was the case before wall-to-wall carpeting was installed in 1971. No traces of the original chandelier were found, so a model similar to the original one in the College Hall will be installed. Shelving units are being reconfigured or relocated to allow for more seating space in the reading room. The office partition was removed from the adjacent room and new shelves are being built. We are seeking out antique furniture to complement existing chairs and couches, which will be added over the summer and fall. Fluorescent fixtures were removed and some of the original brass lamps stored upstairs are being rehabilitated and reinstalled. George Etienne Cartier's desk, the clock, the two large tables, and all the library chairs will be restored by Parks Canada experts. Volunteer Claude Belleau will complete restoration of the Cosmo in time for the library's reopening. Ceiling fans and a luminous carpeted kids' section worthy of Alice in Wonderland will be added to the back room.

Our restoration project continues to move forward. The next issue will feature an article on choices made when restoring the College Hall and former classroom for classics. As soon as funding is confirmed, the gaol cells and upper levels of the building will be restored over the following year, with proper signage and site interpretation material integrated. Stay posted! ■

# THE LHSQ: A FACILITATOR FOR 2008 by Samar Sawaya

*"I would like a show of hands for those who support the notion that the LHSQ continues to coordinate all correspondence," asked Ms. O'Donnell, mediator of the 400th anniversary brainstorm held on March 20, 2006.*

*"To facilitate would be a more appropriate word than coordinate!" voiced Mr. Cheetham. All participants agreed.*

-Taken from the minutes of March 20, 2006 meeting

During the month of March 2006, the Canadian Heritage department gave the LHSQ the mandate to conduct consultation sessions with the English-speaking population of Quebec to discuss their contribution to the 400th anniversary of Quebec City Festivities.

The consultation was collected through three different sessions: the first was held on March 17, during which Mr. Jacques Dupuis, Director of Associate Programming of the *Société du 400e anniversaire de Québec* presented the guidelines and conditions for applying for funding. The second was held following the AGM on March 20th, and despite the late hour, many participants

joined for the brainstorm and voiced their ideas and concepts. For the final session on March 25th, the Society wanted to provide participants with a presentation on alternative methods of funding, since the Société du 400e cannot cater for all requests. Mr. Gil Desautels, Vice-President for Ketchum Canada Inc. provided hints and advice on winning conditions nowadays in the world of philanthropy.

These three sessions attracted a good number of participants. Despite the great variety of interesting and creative ideas, some themes and ideas were recurrent, namely immigration, youth and education, cultural diversity, shared heritage, and pan-Canadian cooperation. A consensus was reached on the need for continued communication and its central role in the success of the Anglophone community's contribution to the 2008 celebrations. It was apparent throughout the consultation process that many of the groups present have complementary projects. As a consequence, the overall impact of the Anglophone community's contribution would be greatly enhanced through the coordination of resources as would be the potential success of future fundraising efforts.


You may consult our final report as sent to Canadian Heritage on our website:

<http://www.morrin.org/pages/400ideas.php>


The LHSQ has now been asked by Canadian Heritage to present a proposal to carry-on this mandate, and therefore keep acting as a facilitator. More information will be available on our website very soon.



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## 2005 ACHIEVEMENTS by France Cliche

Important achievements were made by staff and volunteers in 2005. The Society managed a team of 5 full-time permanent staff, 4 part-time members, and 3 summer students throughout the year.

Work began early in 2005 on the Morrin Centre restoration project. Architects and engineers were hired in the first few months while the team prepared for a series of moves to empty out the building in May. The team settled into temporary offices on the ground floor of the *Espace Bon Pasteur* on *rue de la Chevrotière*. Contractors carried out a first phase of selective demolition work throughout the summer, enabling us to plan the major structural and mechanical work.

Archaeologists from the city of Quebec made interesting discoveries, confirming the location of the prison oven and pantry. Final plans were deposited at the end of the year, with work beginning in early 2006.



**Selective demolition work in summer/autumn 2005 revealed these archaeological vestiges underneath the old kitchen floor**

Despite our move, cultural events continued in 2005, with many taking place in our Kirk Hall temporary library. A total of 63 events took place in 2005, not including the numerous hard hat tours in the summer. Some, such as our theatrical visits on the *Journées de la Culture*, attracted participants in the hundreds. The team also worked hard on a virtual exhibit and school programmes, which will allow the Society to extend itself farther into the educational sector during 2006.

The Society's communications strategy continued to evolve in 2005. In addition to improving the production level of the Society Pages, our quarterly bulletin, a new website at [www.morrin.org](http://www.morrin.org) was launched in October. The team also secured funding for promotional brochures for our library and school programmes, which will be launched in 2006. An event and news update called the "Morrin Report" was started in the autumn of 2005 with CBC Radio One, broadcast on the first Thursday of each month. The project continued to feature regularly in the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph, *le Soleil*, *le Carrefour*, and on *Radio-Canada* broadcasts.

The Society started developing a set of commercial activities in 2005. These include development of rental venues for weddings and corporate events, partnerships with caterers and event planners, and links with the film industry.

Important work was done on our collection from our temporary offices. A thorough assessment of the collection began in 2005, a first step in ensuring that the books on our shelves will be relevant to our membership when we return to the building. This will also aid in assessing the collection's value and assist in the computerization project. (*see page 5 for details*)

Last, but not least, 2005 was an important year with regards to fundraising. The Society hired KCI Canada Inc. to initiate a process that will lead to major fundraising efforts in 2006. Our *New Beginnings* annual campaign was the first of many steps in securing long-term operating funds for the Morrin Centre. The Society continues to receive grants from various agencies in the Federal, Provincial and local governments as well as private foundations. ■

## OUR NEW COUNCIL 2006-07

*The Annual General Meeting took place on the evening of March 20, 2006, attracting a large crowd in the Kirk Hall. A new council was elected, made up of the following people:*

<b>President</b>	David F. Blair
<b>Vice-President</b>	Peter Black
<b>Treasurer</b>	James Haberlin
<b>Secretary</b>	Diane Kameen
<b>Honorary Librarian</b>	Marie Creighton Tremblay
	William G.K. Boden
	James Donovan
	Judith Dunn
	Michael McCormack
	Grant McIntosh
	Patrick McSweeney
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	Lorraine O'Donnell
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Merci à nos principaux collaborateurs :  
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d'Orchestrer ces événements ...

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Il nous fera plaisir de personnaliser  
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  - Recherche de salle
  - Décors et ambiance
  - Musique
  - Soirée thématique



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# LEARNED SOCIETIES NOW AND THEN

by Tom Welham & Patrick Donovan

Imagine gathering together the greatest minds of an era. Imagine that they present and discuss their latest ideas with their contemporaries. Their goal is to advance human understanding in areas ranging from astronomy and botany, to philosophy and history. For over four hundred years, learned societies have provided intellectuals with this very opportunity. Many different types of associations were inspired by these societies through the years, all of them contributing to the growth of cultural and intellectual life in Canada and elsewhere.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

The earliest learned societies emerged in Europe and include the Roman *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* (1603), the *Institut de France* in Paris (1635) and London's Royal Society (1660). These societies were encyclopaedic in scope, bridging science and the liberal arts. Most hosted lectures, established libraries and museums, and published journals.

Learned Societies came to North America in 1743 when Benjamin Franklin founded the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia: "The first drudgery of settling new colonies is now pretty well over," he wrote, "and there are many in every province in circumstances that . . . afford leisure to cultivate the finer arts, and improve the common stock of knowledge." The APA's mandate was broad, covering everything from archaeology, science, and Shakespeare. The Society served for a time as the unofficial national library, museum and patent office of the USA.

## FOR MEN OF LEARNING AND TASTE

The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (LHSQ) was the first learned society to be founded in Canada. It was established by Lord Dalhousie in 1824, who said that "in England these societies lead to every improvement, amusing, instructive, moral & Religious. . . in Canada they will & must first lead to harmony in private life; the use of books will put down that narrow minded tyranny of the Catholic Priesthood."

The LHSQ asked "men of learning and taste" to join its ranks. Subscription rates were high and early members tended to be friends of the governor, a fact that attracted criticism: "Nothing that is true or good can come by way of this Society," wrote a journalist for *Le Canadien* a few months after the Society's foundation. "It will be the history of governors published by authority, in the seat of government and by the children of government." Nevertheless, François-Xavier Garneau,

who researched his *Histoire du Canada* at the LHSQ's library and was an active member, actually criticized the colonial elite in his volumes.

Gradually, the Society's membership and interests broadened. Subscription fees were lowered and a natural history museum and reading room were opened. The Society's main purpose was to collect material on the natural, civil and literary history of British North America. It published original research and historical documents. Its archives formed the basis of the first federal public archives in Ottawa, which it was instrumental in founding through a petition presented to the government in 1871.

## DEMOCRATIZATION OF LEARNED SOCIETIES

At the start of the nineteenth century, George Birkbeck held free night classes in Glasgow, Scotland, for those "men whose situation in early life has precluded the possibility of acquiring even the smallest portion of scientific knowledge." Birkbeck's efforts led to the foundation of the first Mechanics' Institutes in Glasgow (1821) and London (1823). Although aimed at a different social class, the structure of a Mechanics' Institute mirrored that of a learned society. They held public lectures, operated a library and reading room, and often had a museum of scientific apparatus. By mid-century, there were over 600 such institutes in Britain.

The first Canadian Mechanics' Institute was founded in Montreal in 1828, closely followed by Toronto and Quebec City in 1830, and Halifax in 1831. Institutes were soon opened in smaller cities throughout the country. Mechanics' Institutes were the first attempt in Canada to extend the benefits of useful education to adults. They were supported by wealthy industrialists who hoped that educated workers would be more productive. With the growth of government-sponsored technical classes in the mid-1800s, the Mechanics' Institutes diversified and broadened their appeal. Many were integrated into the public library network.

## POUR LA PATRIE

In the early nineteenth century, Canadian learned societies attracted few Francophones. Many did not feel welcome in institutions generally associated with the Anglophone elite. The *Institut Canadien de Montreal*, founded in 1844, was the first learned society specifically for Francophones. An *Institut* was opened in Quebec City in 1847 and in Ottawa in 1852. By the mid-1850s, there were over 20 *Instituts Canadiens* in the province.

*Continued on next page...*

# LEARNED SOCIETIES NOW AND THEN

*Continued from previous page*

The *Institut's* goal was to foster an appreciation of the French language and spirit. Membership was initially restricted to French-Canadians "by race", but this clause was soon abolished when a French-speaking Irishman by the name of Francis Cassidy caused a stir.

The Catholic church soon got in the way of the Institut. The Church had a long history of opposition to learned societies going back to the persecution of the founding members of the *Accademia de Lincei* for supporting Galileo's idea that the Earth revolved around the Sun. In Quebec, the Church opposed anti-clerical publications on display in the reading room of the *Institut Canadien de Montreal*. Furthermore, some of its lecturers had called for the separation of church and state and the creation of secular schools. This led Monseigneur Ignace Bourget to forbid Catholics from joining; some were even denied proper burials for belonging to the group. The *Institut* stood firm, citing freedom of expression, and launched an unsuccessful appeal to Rome against Bourget's edict. However, the Church triumphed and the Montreal *Institut* was closed in 1884. The *Instituts Canadiens* in Quebec City and elsewhere were more sympathetic towards the Church and agreed to withdraw the controversial books. The Church also created its own learned societies. The most successful was the Cabinet de Lecture Paroissial (1857), which had a library and a large lecture theatre in Montreal capable of accommodating 800 people. A third of the public lectures were delivered by priests.

## FROM COAST TO COAST

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the creation of scientific and historical societies outside Quebec and Ontario. These range from the Nova Scotia Historical Society (1878) to the Natural History Society of British Columbia (1890). These societies were concerned primarily with their immediate locality. They adopted the structure of learned societies by holding lectures, founding a library and/or museum, publishing transactions, etc.

## SOCIETIES FOR WOMEN

Societies specifically for women were also founded in the late 19th century. The first bachelor's degree awarded to a woman in Canada was granted at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick in 1875, and many universities followed suit. This rise of women's education led to the creation of societies such as The Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto (1896)

and Ottawa (1898). Older learned societies also eventually admitted women as members; the LHSQ's first women members joined in 1923.

## EVOLUTION AND MUTATION

In the early years of the nineteenth century, learned societies tended to focus on all aspects of knowledge. However, the creation of institutions such as public archives and university presses prompted the societies to specialize or even change their vocation. Today, many of the early Canadian learned societies manage library collections. The Institut Canadien de Quebec heads several public libraries in Quebec City. The Mechanics' Institute of Montreal also manages a successful library. Other learned societies became more specialized. The LHSQ, for instance, gradually came to focus more on its library and the history of English-speakers in the Quebec City region.

## ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

At the end of the nineteenth century, a need was felt for a national multidisciplinary learned society. The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) was founded in 1881, with its headquarters in Ottawa. The RSC was a 'hybrid' learned society whose origins lie in a synthesis of ideas from both the Royal Society of London and the *Institut de France*. The RSC established itself at the centre of Canadian academic life, with both French and English sections. It became affiliated with a number of local historical and scientific societies, which included the LHSQ. By 1900 there were 36 affiliated societies whose delegates presented reports of activities at the Society's annual meeting.

The relationship between the two linguistic communities of the RSC was complicated by the climate of imperialism that characterized the late 19th century. Many Anglo-Canadians wanted closer ties with Britain. This loyalty to empire was reflected in the adoption of the society's seal in 1899, which had the royal coat of arms at its centre. This enthusiasm for empire was not universally repeated in the French-Canadian sections. However, one exception was the colourful historian Benjamin Sulte, who went so far as to translate 'God Save the King' into French (*see page 15*).

Learned societies around the world and in Canada were the first to promote free access and the sharing of knowledge. It is hardly surprising therefore, that now, in an age of information, these unique institutions remain at the heart of intellectual life, both preserving the past and considering the future. To find out more about this topic, visit the LHSQ's virtual exhibit at [WWW.MORRIN.ORG/ECLECTICA](http://WWW.MORRIN.ORG/ECLECTICA) ■



## IN MEMORIAM

# THE LADY AT THE DESK

If you were a member of the Society at any time from 1976 to 1997, you will remember “the lady at the desk”, Cilma Landriau. Tall and elegant, soft-spoken and always welcoming, she set the tone in the Library.

Cilma – her father thought up her unusual name – was born in Yorkshire, England. While studying art in London after World War II, she met Paul Landriau. They married and had two daughters, moving around quite a bit before eventually settling in Quebec City.

In an article published in The Canadian Forum of May 1998, Louisa Blair described a visit to “arguably the most wonderful library in Canada”:

*As you hang up your coat, a librarian greets you, resting her cigarette in an ashtray on a vast desk that once belonged to Georges-Etienne Cartier. She inquires solicitously after each visitor's health and listens to their tales... the librarian can also advise you about which of the library's several recent books on Bosnia to read, because she has read them all. You might have an animated discussion about Mordecai Richler's latest novel, or Nino Ricci's, as she's read those too.*

Indeed, Cilma was popular with the LHSQ members because you could rely on her to recommend the books you were sure to enjoy, but also because she took the time to listen when you felt the need to talk. As she remarked on several occasions, “You need to be a psychiatrist to work at the desk”. Although she always had time for members and visitors, there was work to be done in the Library, and Cilma did it so efficiently it seemed effortless.

The elegant calligraphy on the posters and labels in the Library were the product of Cilma's artistic talent, and her delightful line drawings of some of the distinctive features of the reading room – Georges-Étienne Cartier's desk, the spiral staircase, one of the multi-paned windows, and the statue of Wolfe perched on the gallery – were reproduced on note cards for sale in the Library.

Everyone who knew Cilma was saddened to learn of her death in February of this year. ■



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# EXPOSITION JUDEO-QUÉBEC 2008: HISTORY IN THE MAKING

by Lorraine O'Donnell, Ph.D

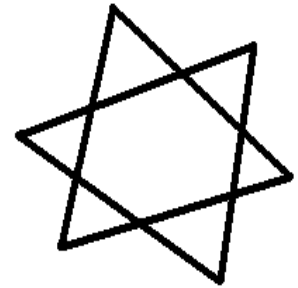
There is a wonderful new historical project starting in Quebec City that I would like my fellow Society members to know about. Entitled "Exposition Judéo-Québec 2008," it will uncover the history of our city's Jewish community and present it in an exhibit at the train station for Quebec's 400th anniversary celebrations.

The story starts, as far as we know, with Esther Brandeau. She was a young French Jew who managed to make her way to Quebec City in 1738 by disguising herself as a boy by the name of Jacques La Fargue. New France was officially Catholic and, as the Dictionary of Canadian Biography article on Brandeau puts it, "a non-Catholic immigrant in New France could look forward only to conversion or deportation." A year after her arrival, Brandeau had not obliged officials by converting and Intendant Hocquart wrote, "Her conduct has not been precisely bad, but she is so fickle, that at different times she has been as much receptive as hostile to the instructions that zealous ecclesiastics have attempted to give her; I have no alternative but to send her away." He did so that same year, 1739, and this, plus Esther Brandeau's own tale told to colonial officials, is just about all we know about her. It is enough to be the stuff of legends. There is a children's novel, *Esther*, by Sharon E. McKay, a novel by Pierre Lasry, recently released in English under the title *Esther: A Jewish Odyssey*, and even an art installation by Wendy Oberlander called "Translating Esther."

We can bring Quebec City's Jewish story almost up to date by looking at another adventurous Jewish woman, Lea Roback. Born in Montreal in 1903, Roback moved with her family to Beauport, near Quebec, where she lived with her parents and eight brothers and sisters. They were the only Jewish family in town. Lea Roback went on to live in Montreal, New York and Berlin, where she began a life-long involvement with the workers, women's and peace movements. She travelled to the Soviet Union during the 1930s and, back in Montreal, organized unions and opened the city's first Marxist bookstore. Lea Roback died in 2000 at the age of 96 in Montreal.

In between these tales are many others, equally fascinating, of merchants (the Gradis family of France, Samuel Jacobs in the eighteenth century, and Maurice Pollack in the twentieth, to name just a few) and politicians (Ezekiel Hart and Peter Bercovitch), not to

mention the remarkable story of nineteenth century man-about-town and diarist Abraham Joseph, or of engineer Sigismund Mohr, who helped bring electricity and telephones to Quebec City. One of the province's most famous Jews, Aaron Hart, lived mostly in Trois-Rivières but was also a founding member of our own illustrious Society, as its 1831 charter indicates. These and many others helped form a growing Jewish community with its own synagogues, social networks and charitable organisations.



The story continues today, of course. Quebec City still has a small but strong Jewish community, with a synagogue, a Cercle Hillel at the University and, significantly, the stewardship of the Judéo-Québec project itself. Simon Jacobs, who is active in the community in his role as vice-president of Quebec's Beth Israel Ohev Sholom Synagogue, got the project off the ground. It is now run by an independent not-for-profit organization called Exposition Judéo-Québec 2008, which recently received accreditation from the Société du 400e anniversaire de Québec. Mr. Jacobs, a musician with the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec is Judéo-Québec's President. Local community members including Arthur Aaron are on its Board of Directors. The project's committee of experts in the fields of Jewish, Quebec and Canadian history includes Pierre Anctil (University of Ottawa), Ira Robinson (Concordia University), Jean-François Royal (Musée des religions in Nicolet) and Roch Samson (Parks Canada). I am the project historian. A summer student and museologists will soon round out the team.

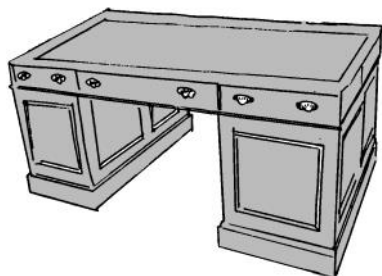
Do you have stories of your own about Quebec City's Jewish community? Maybe you are Jewish yourself, or you had Jewish friends at the Quebec High School, or you shopped at Pollack's on rue St. Joseph. Maybe you heard stories from your grandparents about the Ortenberg trial or waves of Yiddish-speaking immigrants arriving early in the twentieth century. If so, please consider yourself invited to contact the team at (418) 688-8046. We look forward to hearing from you. ■

*Lorraine O'Donnell is the former Morrin Centre project manager and currently a council member of the LHSQ.*

# AN OLD DESK AND ITS HIDDEN SECRETS

by Patrick Donovan

The large desk used by library clerks at the LHSQ has a fascinating history. In the past few months, a lingering mystery that has puzzled old denizens of the library for years has finally been solved. Before we get into that, a bit of background about the desk itself is necessary.



The desk was built by Toronto cabinetmakers Jacques & Hay in 1859 for the office of Sir George-Etienne Cartier. It is an imposing wooden desk fit for the leader of a nation with lots of secret compartments and lockable drawers graced with fine metal handles.

## The Infamous Desk

The desk originally had small round wooden posts on the four corners to support a wire that held a green baize curtain. These were removed after Cartier's death, but traces of their location can still be seen.



**George-Etienne Cartier**

Sir George-Etienne Cartier's role in Canadian history is exceptional to say the least. He was co-premier of the United Province of Canada with John A. Macdonald when the desk was made. The desk followed Cartier as the capital moved from Toronto to Quebec and later again to Ottawa. Cartier is best remembered for his role in Confederation; this former *patriote* sought to make the idea of a Canadian federation palatable to Quebec's Francophones. He was also instrumental in setting up the transcontinental railroad. Following Confederation, Cartier sat at the desk while serving as Canada's first Minister of Militia and Defence. He left for England in 1872 and died soon after of Bright's disease.

The next famous person to use the desk was historian Benjamin Sulte. He was the proud owner for a few years after 1874, a time when he handled correspondence at the Department of Militia and Defence. Sulte is best known for his 8-volume *Histoire des Canadiens Français*. This work differed from previous histories by focusing on the living conditions of ordinary people and adopted a critical



**Benjamin Sulte**

approach to the clergy's role in New France. He was a prolific writer, who published more than 3,500 articles in his lifetime. Sulte translated « God Save the King » into French, which earned him the ire of some contemporaries, who considered him a « traitor of his race ». He was a prominent member of the Royal Society of Canada (see pages 12-13). Sulte installed a brass plaque on the desk to prove its identity. He also secretly placed a parchment in the desk.



**Charles-Eugène Panet**

The desk continued to sit in the Department of Militia and Defence. It was used by Colonel Charles-Eugene Panet, who was deputy minister until 1898. Important and controversial decisions regarding the repression of the Red River rebellions were made at the desk. Panet also played a role in the restoration of Quebec City's fortifications and the creation of the Dominion Arsenal (now part of Artillery Park). His son, Major A. de Lotbinière Panet, inherited the desk and continued his father's legacy by working at the arsenal.

When Major Panet retired in 1913, he gave the desk to the Society, where it has served us well ever since. Many have pulled drawers, turned the desk over and taken it apart in an attempt to find Sulte's secret parchment. None have succeeded in finding it.

The desk was expertly restored by Parks Canada this spring. Restorers were contemplating x-ray scans to see if any hints could be found as to the parchment's location. This was unnecessary. One of the restorers had the clever idea of unscrewing the brass plaque and there it was! The fragile parchment was placed in a humid room for 35 hours before it could be safely unfolded. It reads as follows: « Je certifie que ce pupitre a appartenu à Geo. Et. Cartier, baronnet, qui en a fait usage de 1864 à 1872. Benjamin Sulte. Ottawa, 9 mars 1895. » The parchment was photographed and examined. It will be placed in the LHSQ fonds and a copy will continue to live on inside the desk. ■

# BULLETIN BOARD

## LHSQ LIBRARY RE-OPENING BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A special library deserves a special opening. Come to the LHSQ library opening weekend on July 8 and 9 and indulge in

literature and the arts.

### Saturday July 8

We will start off the re-opening at 10 am on July 8 at the library. Be prepared for a special programme including small breakfast treats, tea, coffee and a versatile programme. From 12 to 4 p.m. it's showtime for all the writers amongst our members and for some great music. On Saturday at 8PM, **Madeleine Thien** will read from her novel *Certainty*. Note that Saturday is the last day to sign up for our children's Book Quest.



### Sunday July 9

On Sunday the library opens as usual at 1 p.m. and families are invited to participate at the kick off of our summer Book Quest. Kids receive small treats and receive instructions on how the Book Quest works and

what they have to do to participate in the draw for prizes in September. Pirate Jack will be present to tell his stories about treasure hunts and secret treasure maps. From 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. our literature programme continues. At night time we will restart our special Candlelight series in the library. The subject will be announced soon.



### CASTING FOR ALICE

For the re-opening of the LHSQ library in July 8 and the opening of the Morrin Centre on September 1st, we are conducting a special casting on Saturday June 17th at 1 p.m. at the Kirk Hall: we are looking for a little girl that looks like Alice in Wonderland to act in a short scene at both reopening events. The candidate should be capable of speaking basic English and aged between 8 and 11 years old. A jury including playwright and producer Paul Cummins will pick the best candidate. Great prizes are awaiting the winner. Register by June 15th at 694-9147.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

We encourage all to send their letters or questions to 44, *chaussée des Écossais, Québec (Québec)*. G1R 4H3, or [info@morrin.org](mailto:info@morrin.org).

9 March 2006

Sirs,  
Permit me to question Mary-Ellen Rooney's choice of word used to describe the sound of an approaching flock of geese. Geese "honk." Crows, rooks and ravens "caw." Perfect onomatopoeic words. The raven would not of course be heard in North America. Just as well, for as that Welsh healer could tell you, this bird has mythic powers foretelling bad luck. Perhaps I quibble. In flights of fancy a writer may well have licence to transpose anything.

*Irene Calfat*  
Sainte-Foy, Quebec

Dear Ms. Calfat,

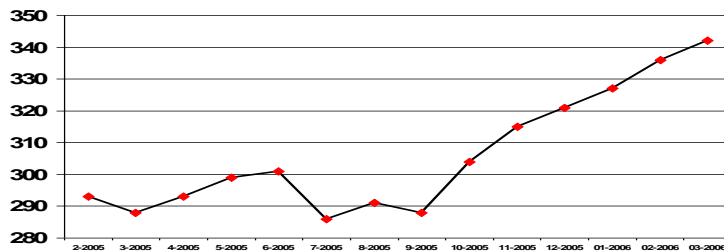
Thank you for your insightful quibble. However, if I may respectfully re-quibble your quibbling, I regret to inform you that the Common Raven (*Corvus Corax*) is indeed found throughout North America. It can even be found in the immediate vicinity of our fair city. I reproduce a drawing from the *Complete Field Guide to American Wildlife* for your information.

Furthermore, if Edgar Allan Poe is to be believed, the raven not only caws but occasionally speaks: "quoth the raven nevermore."

Sincerely,  
*The Editors*



Increase in Membership  
February 2005 – March 2006



Thanks to all our members for helping us grow!