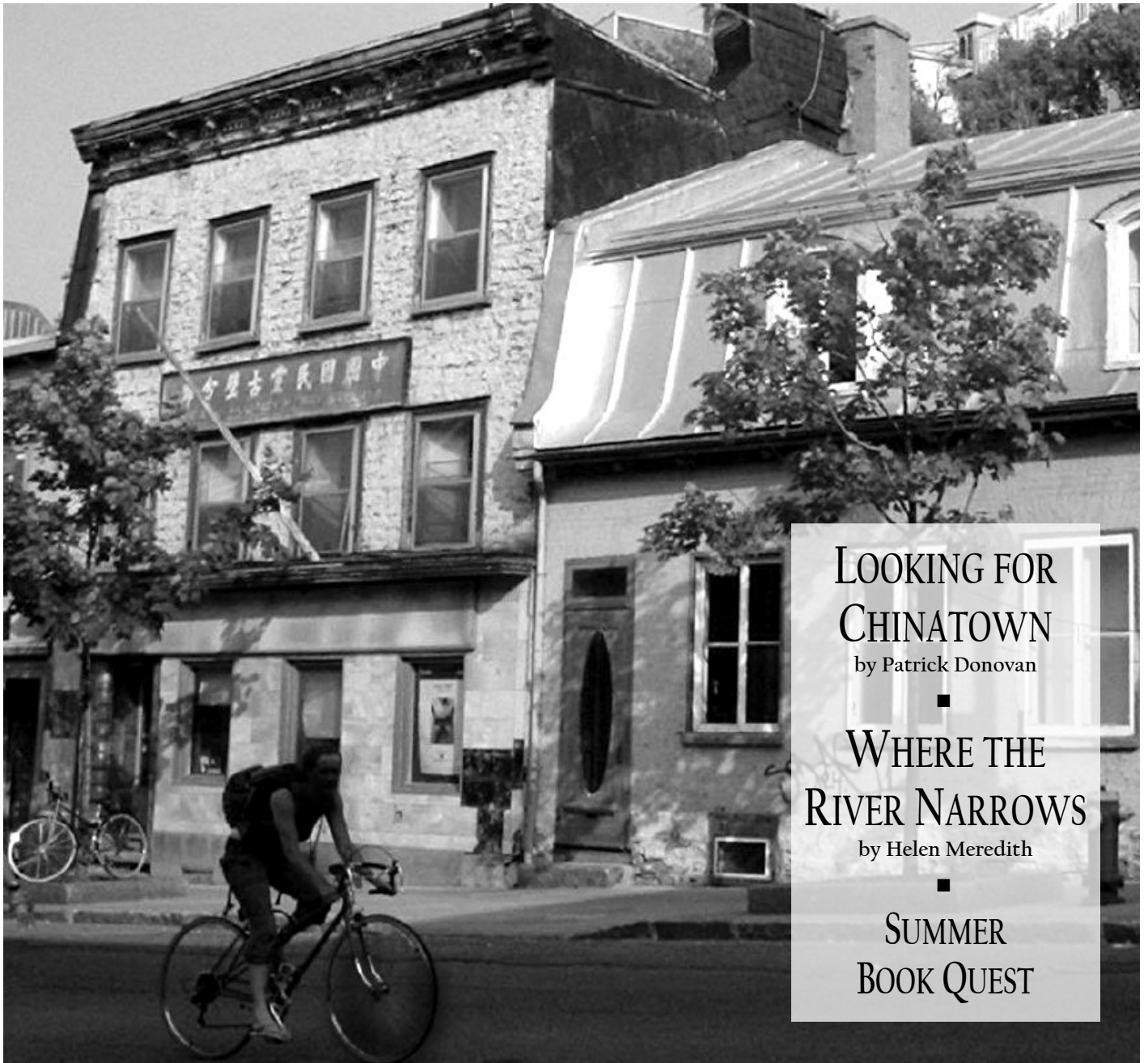




# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 16 ■ SUMMER 2007 ■ \$2,00



## LOOKING FOR CHINATOWN

by Patrick Donovan



## WHERE THE RIVER NARROWS

by Helen Meredith



## SUMMER BOOK QUEST



# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 16 ■ SUMMER 2007



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The *Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to foster English-language culture in the Quebec City region and share its diverse heritage. The LHSQ manages the Morrin Centre

ISSN 1913-0732

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members and friends,

Spring is blooming and so is the Morrin Centre. I am proud to see that the Society is rekindling a venerable tradition of welcoming fine writers. Over the past few months, some of Canada's best writers have spoken in the Society's reading room. This is only the beginning. Once the centre is fully restored, we will be able to host more quality events like these.

Sadly, as we go to press, we have not yet received news from Canadian Heritage to confirm funding for the second phase of the Morrin Centre project. We are still aiming at completing this project in time for 2008 and the 400th anniversary celebration of Quebec. We are advised that the file is on the desk of the Honorable Bev Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, and is awaiting her approval.

This wait is causing some strains for all of us. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the staff, the executive, the council, the campaign cabinet and the volunteers for their remarkable support.

I encourage you to attend the many wonderful events that are organized at the Morrin Centre in the coming months, and to visit the Library regularly. The more we make this building come alive, the easier it will be to generate support from benefactors.

Sincerely,



David F. Blair, President



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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 183<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting took place on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at the LHSQ library. 50 people were in attendance. Members had the chance to be informed of last year achievements, to hear different reports submitted by Council Members and by the Executive Director, and to take part in our famous magazine auction, with Vice-president Peter Black as the auctioneer. A game, hosted by Mrs. Louisa Blair, and a wine and cheese followed the "formal" part of the meeting, making this AGM a quite enjoyable night.

All members of the 2006 Council were re-elected (see inside front cover for details). Steve Cameron stepped in as "member at large" on the Executive Committee.

Our Annual Report will shortly be posted online at [www.morrin.org](http://www.morrin.org). ■

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## SUMMER 2007 UPDATE

by France Cliche, executive director

After a busy spring, the LHSQ is ready to undertake new challenges this summer. A whole new programme has been developed, including the return of our Candlelight events. Hard hat tours will also be offered again. Finally, our famous children's reading club, The Book Quest, will be back.

## SOME NEWS

**Staff:** The LHSQ will be happy to welcome several students to its team this summer. You will certainly meet **Emilie Nicolas**, who will work part-time at the desk. Federal government cutbacks led to fewer summer job grants, but we will still be welcoming two new staff hired through the Young Canada Works program. One of these will be our winter intern **Andrée-Anne Pelletier**, who is presently completing her degree in *Techniques de Tourisme*. She will be joined by **Andrea Spencer**, from Western Canada, who is studying English at *Université Laval*. We also welcome **Martin Pelletier**, who recently completed an archives management program; he is joining us on an internship financed by the city of Quebec to help sort out our active documents. ,

Several people have come and gone in the last few months. Thanks to library clerk **Louise Lemoine**, who recently found work at the CHUQ archives. Although she is no longer working at the desk, she will work on our archives later this year. **Angelic Vendette**, an intern from the Business Administration program at Champlain/St. Lawrence, worked on our business plan during a two-week internship. **Mathieu Rompré**, our research assistant, is currently putting the final touches on the *VoxTours* audio tour project. After completing his mandate at the LHSQ, Mathieu moves to Ottawa, where he will start working for Public Works and Government Services Canada. Last but not least, the Society would like to thank our full-time volunteer, **Ian Wearmouth**, from Calgary.

**Events:** Various events took place at the Centre this spring. A grant from the Canada Council for the Arts allowed us to add the Writers' Series to our programming, bringing many well-known English-language writers from across the country to Quebec, namely **Anita Rau Badami**, **George-Elliott Clarke**, **David Homel**, **Nalini Warriar**, **Susan Elmslie**, and **Jeffrey Moore**. Another grant allowed us to attract two local writers, **H. Nigel Thomas** and **Neil Bissoondath**, last February. We hope to make this a recurrent series every spring. The official unveiling of the portrait of our former president **Rosemary Power Cannon Delaney** took place on March 10, attracting 50 people. Her portrait is now prominently displayed at the top of our staircase. Last, but not least, we are working with the professional musicians of *Sons et Couleurs* to develop a series of musical concerts in 2008.

**Restoration project:** Phase II of the project, which includes the installation of the elevator, the restoration of the chemistry lab, and the development of a permanent exhibit, should begin soon. We are still expecting the federal government's announcement of \$550,000. We are confident we will shortly receive the confirmation of the funding. This will be supplemented by the necessary private donations to launch a new phase. ■

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## TRANSACTIONS

## LOOKING FOR CHINATOWN

by Patrick Donovan

“There’s no Chinatown in Quebec City. There’s never been one,” snapped a research assistant at the city archives. It sounded as if I wasn’t the first to come asking for information. “There were a handful of Chinese-owned stores in the lower city, but it was hardly a ‘Chinatown.’”

Had I been misled all these years? Articles mentioned it in *Le Devoir* and the *Globe and Mail*. I’d heard local Chinese reminiscing about it on the six o’clock news. Louisa Blair devotes a chapter to Quebec’s Chinatown in *The Anglos*. Then there’s star playwright Robert Lepage, who staged a 6-hour opus called *La Trilogie des Dragons* – it begins in a Lower Town parking lot where the kids, poised to dig to China, realize they don’t have to dig too deep to find it. They discover instead that memories of opium dens, mah-jongg, and Chinese laundries exist very close to the surface. “It used to be a Chinatown,” the play ends, “now it’s a parking lot.” Was it all just exaggeration, someone digging for a story? Well yes... and no.

The Chinese first began arriving on the West Coast during the 1850s gold rush. A second wave came in the 1870s, cheap labour for the cross-country railway, where they earned ten to twenty times what they could earn in Guangdong. The last spike in the CPR railway was driven in 1885, and a discriminatory Chinese head tax was implemented that same year. This made further immigration difficult. Anti-Chinese sentiment ran high and many landlords would not lease apartments to them. They banded together and created Chinatowns.

Some Chinese fled discrimination by coming east in the 1890s. A trickle made it to Quebec City, but most settled in larger cities. In 1911, there were 68 Chinese in Quebec City while 1,200 had settled in Montreal. Nevertheless, their presence was visible. Most ran laundries or restaurants.

Quebec City’s Chinese continued to face the discrimination that had plagued them out west. In 1910, *Le Soleil* tells its readers to patronize

Canadian businesses and flee the Chinese: “*Ces ateliers de chinois sont pour la plupart des foyers infects, où ceux qui les fréquentent sont exposés à contracter des maladies, et nous ignorons pas non plus que ce sont trop souvent... des centres d’immoralité.*” Implying that the Chinese were dirty and immoral was not unique to Quebec City. There were similar reactions to the ‘yellow peril’ all over the western world.



The sign of the old Kuomintang/Canton Chop Suey building at 617, St. Vallier (presently under restoration)

Whereas some reacted to the Chinese in Quebec with aggression, others tried to save their souls. The ‘Foyer Catholique Chinois’ was founded in 1923 on rue du Pont. Soon, a dozen Chinese took part in weekly Bible lessons. Concerned Christians heaved a sigh of relief when the first Chinese was baptized later that year. The mayor of Quebec and his wife were so moved that they became the convert’s official godparents. Nevertheless, many continued their own religious practices. In Louisa Blair’s *The Anglos*, Napoleon Woo described his mother’s religion as “Buddhist-Catholic.”

The 1940s and 1950s are seen by many as Chinatown’s glory days in Quebec. There were

yearly parades and community festivals. The religious-minded met at the mission. The politically minded met at the Quebec branch of the Kuomintang, which was opposed to Communist rule and supported the Taiwan-based government of Chiang Kai-shek. The Canton Chop Suey House was located below the Kuomintang headquarters, with other businesses on St. Vallier Street and over 40 Chinese laundries in the city. Having come by way of western Canada, many of these Chinese spoke English. Napoleon Woo recounted that a contingent of Chinese “would walk to St. Patrick’s School together in the morning as a group.”

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Chinese scattered. Many followed the suburban dream. Others left for larger cities or retired to China. The construction of the Dufferin-Montmorency expressway above their Lower Town haunts contributed to a general decline in the area, but the Chinese were getting wealthier and Lower Town was getting poorer.

Although it clearly sounds as if a Chinatown existed in Quebec, statistics do give some credence to the aforementioned annoyed archivist. At the peak of Chinatown’s apparent golden age of the 1940s, Quebec’s Chinese population numbered less than 200. Even in the St. Roch Ward, where Chinatown was located, only 0.3% of the population was Chinese. The Chinese were vastly outnumbered by working-class Francophones and there were at least twice as many non-Chinese Anglophones. The construction of the expressway is frequently cited as Chinatown’s death knell, but only 6 Chinese people were expropriated during the massive demolitions that took place at the time. Whereas cities like Montreal and New York defined clear legal boundaries for their Chinatowns, this was never the case in Quebec City. Seen in this light, the idea of a Chinatown in Quebec seems to be largely a mental construct.

However, I see no reason to challenge anyone who chooses to refer to the area as a former Chinatown. Despite its unofficial status, the area at the foot of *Côte d’Abraham* did share characteristics with many old working-class Chinatowns across the country, from the important concentration of Chinese-run businesses to the community associations. Some could argue that stories are more important than statistics in defining a sense

of place. Furthermore, there’s no arguing that the lower town neighbourhoods at the base of the expressway are the birthplace of the small Chinese community in Quebec City. I guess it all depends on how you define Chinatown.

One should not lose a sense of proportion in the attempt, though. In the year 2000, an alarmist article in *Saturday Night* magazine about “ethnic cleansing” in Quebec City used the disappearance of Quebec’s Chinatown as evidence to back up its ludicrous premise. The facts are quite different. Though Chinatown has disappeared, there are six times as many Chinese in Quebec City today as there were in Chinatown’s supposed heyday!

There are still tangible reminders of a Chinese presence in the former Chinatown. Chinese still meet in the old Kuomintang building. The *Wok n’ Roll* still dishes up the Chinese-Canadian fare it started serving in 1957. The community sponsors a festival with dragon boats every fall.

The municipal government is now seeking to commemorate Chinese presence in the neighbourhood. A short and particularly bleak dead-end street was renamed *rue de Xi’an* in 2006. Needless to say, the local Chinese community was unimpressed. The city is now planning a park with a Chinese archway and lions financed by the city of Xi’an in China. There is reason to hope it will be better than the first attempt at commemoration.

A short walk west along St. Vallier leads from a dead Chinatown to a neighbourhood with a living Asian presence. In the past ten years, the number of Asian restaurants and shops in St. Sauveur has grown. There are over a dozen restaurants in close proximity. There are proper Asian groceries or supermarkets selling the usual fish balls and duck eggs. The population in this neighbourhood is not Chinese – most are first- or second-generation immigrants from Laos, Vietnam or Cambodia. Still, it’s as close as Quebec City gets to Chinatown nowadays, and the remaining Chinese in the suburbs probably do their grocery shopping here. Like other immigrant communities before them, these South-East Asians will likely prosper and move to different areas, as the Chinese did before them. ■

# FROM OUR TREASURER

## CAPITALIZE ON STOCK MARKET GAIN WITHOUT PAYING INCOME TAX

by James Haberlin, Treasurer

Who can forget the tech bubble years when everyone refused to sell Nortel shares for fear of the income tax bite. In hindsight should we have capitalized on these gains, paid the tax, and supported our favourite charity? A second chance is possibly at our door step.

Anyone with important unrealized capital gains is now able to transfer their securities to a registered charity without having to include any capital gain as income on their tax return and still receive a

deductible income tax donation receipt. Those with securities such as Alcan, Bell Canada, or oil and gas stocks that have appreciated immensely over the past years can greatly benefit the LHSQ while reducing their current-year income taxes. What better way to contribute to the Society! Do not hesitate to contact our executive director if you think this way of supporting could apply to your situation. One of the chartered accountants on Council would gladly meet you to discuss the various possibilities.

**Example:** 500 shares of Alcan, owned and purchased for \$40/share. Current market value is \$92/share.

**Situation 1:** If the shares are sold outright and a cash donation is made to the LHSQ

Proceeds of disposition (500 shares at \$92 each).....	\$46,000
Cost of shares (500 shares at \$40 each).....	-\$20,000
Gain on disposition.....	\$26,000
<i>Taxable gain</i> .....	\$13,000
<i>Income tax owing on sale of securities</i> .....	\$6,500
Money available for donation purposes	
-proceeds of sale.....	\$46,000
-minus income tax on capital gain .....	-\$6,500
Money available for donation.....	\$39,500
<i>Income tax credit on donation</i> .....	(\$18,170)
Net cost to donor (\$46,000 + \$6,500 – \$18,170).....	\$34,330

**Situation 2:** Gift of Securities

Market value of securities transferred to LHSQ.....	\$46,000
Income tax credit on donation (\$46,000 x 46%) .....	-\$21,160
Net cost to donor .....	\$24,840

The advantage of making the donation by transfer of securities rather than cash for the contribution is \$9,490 (\$34,330 – \$24,840). Situation 2 also reduces the donor's income tax, otherwise payable by \$21,160 in the year of transfer. Furthermore, the charity also benefits most from Situation 2 as it receives \$46,000 instead of \$39,500. ■

# LIBRARY PAGES

## SUGGESTIONS FROM THE LITERARY HERITAGE COLLECTION



The Literary Heritage Collection is located next to the new arrivals shelves and identified with this logo

Henry, Walter. *Surgeon Henry's Trifles*. 1843.

Surgeon Henry was born in Ireland, posted to India, took part in Napoleon's autopsy on St. Helena, and finally settled in Quebec City for 15 years during the Patriote rebellions. His memoirs

are a fascinating look at medical history and full of juicy anecdotes. You should read what he says about the founder of St. Patrick's Church!

Bird, Isabella. *The Englishwoman in America*. 1856.

Horrified by her sister's sedentary lifestyle, Isabella Bird spent her life traveling from Kurdistan to the South Pacific. During her visit to Quebec City, she goes off the beaten track to St. Roch, where she catches a spell of cholera due to "the vitiated air." ■

## LIBRARY PAGES

## Wish List

Our library wishes to thank Jill Carette, Virginia Couture as well as Wallace and Mary-Ellen Rooney for donations of numerous books from the last wish list. We now have exactly 62 of the top 100 books of the 20th century!

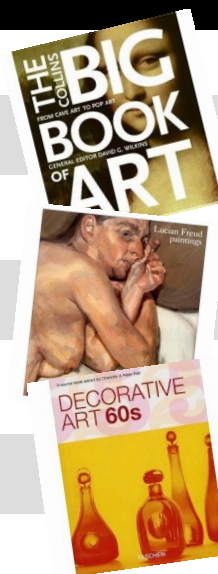
We are currently looking for general-interest richly-illustrated colour art books published after 1995. Think “coffee table.” If in doubt, call Anne-Frédérique at 694-9147.

## EXAMPLES OF BOOKS:

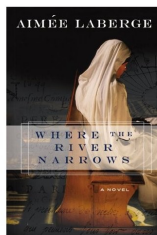
**The Big Book of Art**, publ. 1995  
Recent, richly-illustrated, general-interest

**Lucian Freud, Paintings**, publ. 1999  
Recent, richly-illustrated, general-interest

**Decorative Art 60s**, publ. 2006  
Recent, richly-illustrated, general-interest

BOOK REVIEW: *WHERE THE RIVER NARROWS*

by Helen Meredith



At the McGill book sale last October a familiar expression jumped at me from off the cover of an unfamiliar book: *Where the River Narrows*. Quebec City people know it as the Mi'kmaq definition of the word Québec.

It prompted me to take a closer look at the book. Why had no one bought it yet? The sale had been going on for four hours already, and the enthusiasts and dealers had likely already inspected all the “good” stuff. It was still sitting there. Feeling a little sorry for it – and intrigued after reading the description on the back cover, I added it to my pile.

In due course, I got around to reading the book and this is what I found. A novel of historical fiction (299 pages long) which takes place in Chicoutimi, Quebec City (the Ursuline convent school and later the quartier Montcalm), Sainte Foy, and London. The raconteuse moves between a first person and third person narrative quite deftly. She recounts the lives of three women from three generations: Marie-Reine, Lili, and Lucie.

The story opens in 1918 and concludes in the present day. Life unfolds for the members of Marie-Reine's family. Day to day occurrences set against

a backdrop of Quebec in evolution, World War II, the feminist movement, the evolution of the place of the Roman Catholic church in society and the October Crisis. There aren't any Nobel Prizes won or major scientific achievements undertaken, but there are insights about modern day Quebec that are thoughtful and interesting.

The author grew up in Quebec City and went to *Université Laval*. She lives in Chicago now and has written this book in English. It was published in 2003 by Harper Flamingo Canada. I was delighted to learn that a copy of the book is in the Literary and Historical Society Library. Borrow it, read it, and tell me what you think! ■

*St. Patrick's Church*

Rev. Monsignor Jean Pelletier  
Pastor

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## LIBRARY PAGES

# THE BOOK QUEST IS BACK

de Anne-Frédérique Champoux



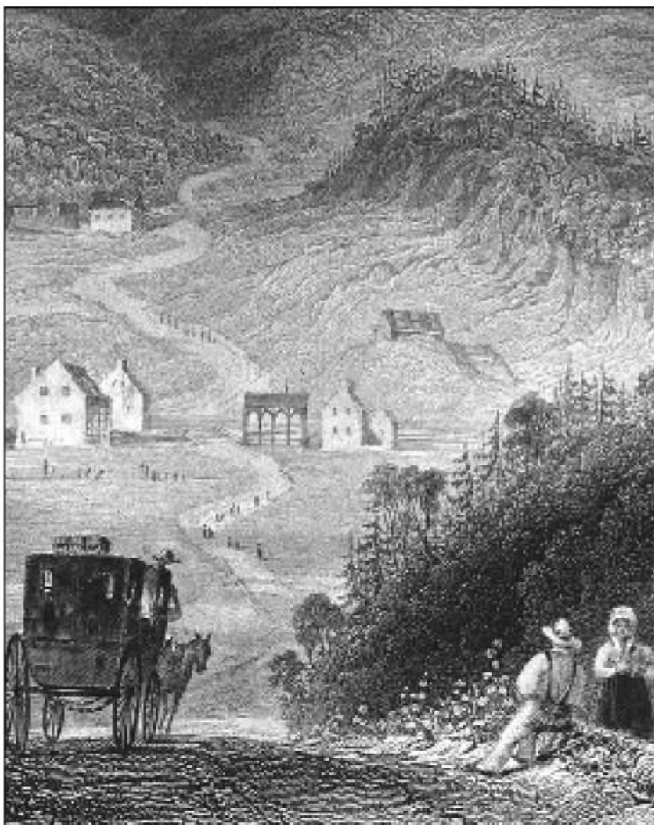
This year again, the LHSQ library offers children a unique chance to read English-language books throughout the summer! Yes, the Book Quest is back! Although one of the purposes of this reading club is to encourage children to continue reading throughout their school holidays, our main goal is to make your kids' summer more enjoyable as they read some thrilling new stories! Prizes and surprises will also be found along the way: that's why we're looking for adventurous readers to pursue this quest.

This year, time travel was chosen as the theme. At the Book Quest launch, taking place on June 16th, 2007, participants will receive all the instructions they need to undertake this exciting time journey. They will then be allowed to borrow the first book they want to read. Children aged from 5 to 8 will

have to read five books from our selection, while those from 9 to 12 will need to read six books to complete their quest. Questions will be asked of all participants to verify their knowledge of time travel.

Your child will therefore have the chance to read fascinating books selected especially for them, and could also be given great prizes! On August 25, 2007, our readers will be invited to our Time Travel Party. Young time travelers and their parents will then be invited to celebrate the end of their quest. Our final draw will take place and our participants could win wonderful prizes such as family admittance to Canyon Sainte-Anne and *Parc Aquarium de Québec*.

Hurry and sign up for this exciting journey through time! ■



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July 21<sup>st</sup>

# Join the Party!

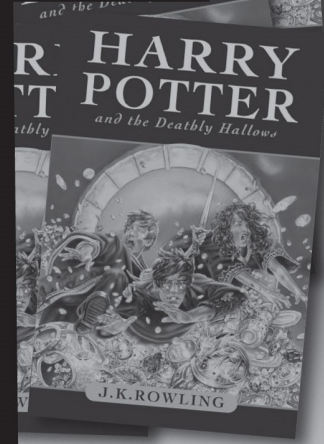
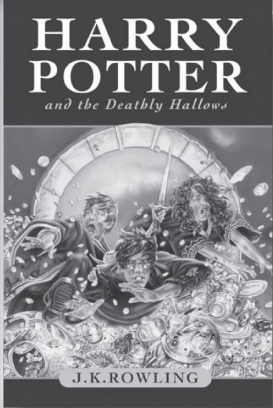


Starting at 9 p.m. on July 20<sup>th</sup>

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## TESTIMONIALS

## TÉMOIGNAGE: MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES

de Suzanne Hénault et Line Arsenault

Nous étions à la recherche d'un espace public permettant de réunir une soixantaine de personnes pour un événement prévu le 11 janvier 2007. Notre Direction du Ministère des Affaires municipales et des régions avait pour projet de consulter les collègues sur un ensemble de pistes de réflexion pour orienter les travaux dont nous étions mandatés.

Idéalement, nous voulions tenir cet événement hors de l'enceinte de notre lieu de travail, mais tout près quand même pour des raisons pratiques. Un premier réflexe (bien ancré) aurait été d'appeler un complexe hôtelier du Vieux Québec disposant de salles de réunions avec forfait « tout inclus ». Ma collègue Line, bien inspirée par sa visite récente du Morrin Centre me souffle à l'oreille qu'il serait intéressant d'aller visiter pour voir si les salles correspondent à nos besoins.

Nous sommes tombées sous le charme du lieu, de son architecture, de sa lumière naturelle, de sa bibliothèque et de son ancienne salle de classe. Cette grande salle dégage une ambiance tout à fait spéciale, favorable à la concentration, la créativité, la discussion et la fête.

Que dire de la gentillesse du personnel qui nous a accueillis. Ne restait qu'à convaincre notre directrice que c'était « le lieu idéal » pour l'événement. Sa décision a été facilitée par la consultation de la pochette publicitaire où les photos du lieu l'ont rapidement séduite.

Pour clore l'événement, nous avons eu une visite guidée et richement commentée des lieux et plus particulièrement de la vieille prison. Cette expérience a fait en sorte que nous sommes maintenant sensibilisés à la valorisation des lieux de culture au quotidien. ■

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You can now make online donations! *CanadaHelps* is a registered charity that manages an e-donations portal, allowing donors to make online credit card donations to Canadian charities. It's a safe, quick, and easy way to continue supporting the LHSQ! Simply visit [www.morrin.org](http://www.morrin.org) and click on the **DONATE** button.

## GRAND PIANO ?



Call for donors: Looking for a grand piano to add to the College Hall. This would be used for musical events (or to add music to events). Charitable receipts issued based on value of professional evaluation conducted by the Morrin Centre.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

TO ASSIST AT EVENTS



Sunday, June 10 at 20:00  
The Irish in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Thursday, June 28 at 19:30  
Ceol Beag (Celtic music show)

Sunday, July 22 at 20 :00  
Candlelight event

Sunday, August 26 at 19:30  
Military history

Friday, August 31  
to Sunday, September 2  
Celtic Festival (various activities)

Sunday, September 9 at 20:00  
Lecture on Jane Austen

...and we're always looking for  
volunteers who can commit to a regular  
schedule at the library desk.



## Vacuum Cleaner Wanted!

Our janitor/caretaker is looking for a **good-quality canister cleaner** to help keep Morrin Centre clean.

Though we appreciate all offers for battered old hoovers, we will not accept them since **we already have a bad one.**



Canister Cleaner



31 August • *août*  
1 September • *septembre*  
2 September • *septembre*

...in the afternoon / *en après-midi*

### SATURDAY & SUNDAY

on the chaussée des Écossais

Artists, vendors and clans  
Celtic Folktales  
Celtic music and instruments  
Dance show from Violon Vert  
Genealogy  
Workshop on Fraser Highlanders  
Celtic languages  
Dance workshop  
Parades  
Skits about Irish famine  
...and more

### SAMEDI & DIMANCHE

sur la chaussée des Écossais

Kiosques d'artistes et de clans  
Contes celtiques  
Musique et instruments celtes  
Danse irlandaise, écossaise et bretonne  
Généalogie  
Atelier sur les Fraser Highlanders  
Langues celtes  
Atelier de danse  
Défilés militaires  
Scénettes sur la famine irlandaise  
...et bien plus encore!

...and in the evening / *et en soirée*

### FRIDAY / VENDREDI

Whisky  
Tasting

w/ music & dance

Dégustation  
de whisky

musique & danse

### SAMEDI / SATURDAY

Fest Noz

with the Breton groups  
L'An des Vents and Lovarn

Fest Noz

avec les groupes Breton  
L'An des Vents et Lovarn

### SUNDAY / DIMANCHE

Closing Show

To be announced

Spectacle de clôture

Information à venir

Up-to-date program details on • *Tous les détails sur*

[celticfestival.morrin.org](http://celticfestival.morrin.org)



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