



The Quebec Association of Retired Teachers

April 2009





President's Message

Gladly we have bid farewell to the harshness of winter and now fondly welcome the warmth, hope, and joy of spring. What a delightful feeling spring fever is with its invigorating and rejuvenating power!

We were all so pleased with the record attendance at our February 11 meeting at St. Pius X. Mme Geneviève Laurin and Constable Olga Belova from the COLT Department of the RCMP alerted us to the latest telemarketing scams and suggested ways to protect ourselves against such crimes. We are now forewarned and forearmed!

We had a fantastic attendance of 64 at our St. Patrick's Day Luncheon at Boccacino's on March 11. Everyone had such a delightful time! The food was great, the company was the best, and the atmosphere was festive and cheery. Once Cynthia Tyler started playing those Irish melodies on her guitar and mouth organ, some members broke out into song and dance! Our sincere thanks to Maureen Goulet and Catherine Barrowcliffe for arranging this most enjoyable luncheon and for taking care of all the decorations.

We had our first gym class in general conditioning and toning at the Leonardo da Vinci Centre on March 10. Our personal trainer gave us a thorough one-hour workout of every part of our bodies. With eleven classes left, we will either be a little more fit or in serious pain and totally exhausted by the end of May.

We are hoping for another great turnout on April 8 at our "Wine-Pairing" Luncheon at the St. Pius X Culinary Institute. After last year's delectable experience, everyone is looking forward to savouring the pairing of different wines and dishes this year.

We are all eagerly looking forward to our Ottawa trip on May 13. Steve Dursa, Catherine Barrowcliffe, Annie Schaffhauser, and Cynthia Tyler have planned an interesting and delightful day for us beginning with a guided tour of Rideau Hall and a possible audience with Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada. Then we're off to the Lord Elgin for lunch, followed by a visit to Dows Lake to view the tulips in all their splendour.

Don't forget to circle May 20 on your calendar. We are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's Annual General Meeting.

Remember to check our website www.qart.ca regularly for news and photos.

I wish you and yours a very happy and blessed Easter. May the vitality and bloom of spring bring each of you renewed energy and optimism.

Flo Civitarese
President of QART

Spring Social

Our Spring Social will be a Wine-Pairing Luncheon on Wednesday, April 8, at 11:30 a.m. at the St. Pius X Culinary Institute. Everyone so enjoyed the wine-pairing luncheon we had last year that we are going to repeat the pleasure with different dishes and different wines. The cost is \$30. Wednesday, April 1, is the absolute deadline to sign up and pay Steve Dursa (291 av. du Parc, L'Ile-Perrot, QC, J7V 9Z5 (514-991-0393). Please remember to bring your ticket to the luncheon.

Ottawa Trip

Our trip to Ottawa will be on Wednesday, May 13. After a guided tour of Rideau Hall and a possible audience with Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, we will lunch at the Lord Elgin in the Elgin Café and then proceed to Dows Lake to view the tulips.

The east-end pick-up will be in the Winners parking lot, 4375 Jean Talon East, east of Pie IX. Please be there at 6:45 a.m. The west-end pick-up will be at Complexe Pointe Claire, Trans Canada Hwy 40 and St. John Blvd. (in front of Chapters). Please be there at 7:45 a.m.

Lunch is not included in the tour price. Our buffet lunch will include soup, assorted sandwiches, salad bar, dessert, tea or coffee. The price is \$14.95 not including taxes or tip.

The cost of the tour is \$37 for members and \$39 for non-members. Wednesday, April 8, is the absolute deadline to sign up and pay :

Steve Dursa, 291 av. du Parc, L'Ile-Perrot, QC, J7V 9Z5 514-991-0393. Please remember to bring your ticket.

Retirement Party for Irene Konecny

Friday, April 24, 2009, at Buffet II Gabbano, 1550 rue Lapierre, La Salle, Qc: Cocktails at 6 pm and dinner at 7 pm. Cost \$60.00 (dinner plus gift) Reply by April 3 2009 to Roma Medwid, Pedagogical Services, EMSB

Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at **St.Pius X** at **1:30 p.m.** on **May 20**. Because of rising costs, the Executive will put forward **two motions** at this meeting. One will propose that the **fee for Associate Members**, presently at \$1, be increased to \$10 a year; the other will propose that only four **newsletters** be mailed to members and posted on QART's website each year in June, September, November, and March.

The president of the **South Shore Chapter, Ivan Harding**, presented a motion at last year's AGM to change the fiscal year from April 1-March 31 to July 1-June 30. His motion was postponed (not tabled) and will therefore be brought forward, according to **Robert's Rules of Order**, for discussion and a vote at this year's AGM.

At this meeting, we will give you the schedule for next year's meetings and socials.

New Member

QART welcomes **Dianne Vena** to our ranks.

A glimmer in the indexation forest

Regarding indexation of pensions, there is only a slight bit of encouraging news these days (Mar 2009). The CSQ is still going ahead with only one demand concerning retirement in their 2010 round of negotiations. They want to protect the purchasing power of those who worked during the 1982 – 2000 period. Concretely, this means that the CSQ wants the formula – (CPI minus 3%, minimum half of CPI) - to be applied to all who worked in that period. In other words, if this is accepted, retirees (present and

future) would get at least half the cost of living adjustment when the indexation of pensions is calculated every January (for the years worked since 1982, but for years prior to 1982 pensions remain completely indexed). And, the CSQ wants to settle this item before the talks turn to salaries and other juicy clauses. You will recall that this was the first of GTAR's objectives on the long road to guaranteeing our purchasing power by an eventual return to full indexation of pensions. Sorry that there isn't more right now,

Ed Zegray

News from AREQ (Association des retraitées et retraités de l'enseignement du Québec)

AREQ issued a Press Release on February 25, 2009, asking the Quebec Government to have the Auditor General investigate the workings of *La Caisse*. Mariette Gélinas, president of AREQ, said *La Caisse's* losses were much greater than those of similar investment funds. She suggested that *La Caisse* should be making cautious investments based on long-term gain rather than risky short-term investments.

In Memoriam

Heather Mastronardi's father-in-law, Palmerino Mastronardi

Hall of Fame – James Lyng

I am writing on behalf of the James Lyng Alumni Ass. and was wandering if there is a possibility to post an announcement on your web site and notices which you send out to your retired people. The alumni is hosting for the Hall of Fame to which former principals and teachers will be inducted. All proceeds will go towards the enriching the quality of academic life for those students presently attending James Lyng... We are hoping that you will be able to help us out by sending out the following release: The James Lyng Alumni is proud to announce the Hall of Fame on Saturday April 25th at James Lyng High School. This year's inductees are:

Sister Jane Francis Burns
Joanne Szwec
Gerald O'Neil
Kevin Figsby

The Weekend to End Breast Cancer invites you to join us for our 5th anniversary celebration, August 21-23, 2009!

Since the Weekend to End Breast Cancer began, just 4 short years ago, more than 10,000 walkers have raised over 30 million dollars to support the work of the Jewish General Hospital, through its Segal Cancer Centre, in caring for the needs of all who are battling this devastating disease. So far, some of the funds raised have been used to equip a state-of-the-art laboratory, hire internationally renowned physicians and researchers and make great progress in exciting new areas of clinical research. But the fight is not yet won and we still need your help.

Breast Cancer is Hard. Walking is Not.

For more information visit www.endcancer.ca

A trip from
A to B

by Carroll Ann Carmody

In mid-October a group of 22 educators and friends took flight for Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands, to begin a two-week voyage on a river boat. The final destination was Budapest, the capital of Hungary. We were about to travel the legendary waterways of Europe: namely, the Rhine, the Moselle, the Main, the Main-Danube Canal, and the Danube and move through approximately 68 locks and five countries. In September 1992, construction had been completed on the last 300 kilometres of canal linking the Main and the Danube rivers in the centre of Europe. Eight locks, each with a tremendous lift of up to 25 metres, had finally made it possible for freighters, barges, and pleasure craft to scale the continental divide. Crossing Europe by boat from the North Sea to the Black Sea had become a modern-day reality. Our floating hotel was the *Amadeus Princess*, a recently built luxury riverboat. We began with a tour of Amsterdam, the city of bicycles, intricate canal systems, and the Rike museum and then set sail for Cologne and Koblenz in Germany. There were numerous stops along the waterways, which allowed us to disembark and walk through towns known for their narrow cobble stoned streets and gabled half-timbered houses. The local guides were knowledgeable and English speaking. The landscape was dotted with magnificent hilltop castles and fortress ruins.

Throughout the trip we were aware of the importance the Rhine played in WWII. The Rhine River was of intense interest to both the Allied forces and the German troops, albeit for entirely different reasons. For the Allies, it was the last major natural obstacle on the march to Berlin and resounding victory. For the Germans, it was the last good place to slow the enemy and somehow stave off total defeat. The Germans, as they retreated, had managed to detonate most of the bridges across the Rhine. However, the explosive devices failed at the Ludendorff Bridge in Remagen, and the allies were able to avail themselves of this bridge. All that remains in Remagen are the towers, which now house a Peace Museum. This bridge was featured in the film *The Last Bridge Standing*.

On day nine of the trip we were in Nuremberg, the second largest city in Bavaria. We drove past the Justice Palace where the WWII War Crimes Tribunal held its trials and visited the parade grounds where Hitler reviewed his troops. All of this was very moving.

In Austria we travelled through the picturesque Wachau Valley and reached the charming town of Melk, the home of the 900-year old Benedictine Abbey, one of Europe's largest baroque monasteries. Then we were off to Vienna, the musical city.

We bid adieu to Austria and arrived in Bratislava, the Capital of Slovakia. A morning tour included the enormous thirteenth-century castle, the old town, and St. Martin's Cathedral with free time to explore the city on our own. We sailed during the evening and awoke at our final destination: Budapest, Hungary. Budapest is often referred to as "the Paris of Eastern Europe". The Hungarian capital is linked by eight bridges. Buda is the western part of the Hungarian capital on the right bank of the Danube. Pest is the eastern, mostly flat, part of Budapest comprising about two-thirds of the capital's territory. It is divided from Buda by the Danube River.

In summary, the trip was full of superlatives...excellent accommodations, food and drink, delightful travelling companions, and gorgeous scenery. It was **WUNDEBAR!**

Pictures are posted on the website www.gart.ca

this committee for 4 terms, Diane Susak for 3, Jill and I for 2, and Judy for 1. Know that all of us will be there to assist the new executive - we will not abandon you - but, a change is required, since we will not be seeking re-election. Please don't leave us staring at ourselves that day. Be brave! Attend! Be heard! Perhaps... volunteer!

The lunch will be held at **Café 349** in Shawville, Quebec. This will be a good location for our long distance travellers from the Pontiac and a great drive for the rest of us. Shawville has a few nice shops and a bakery that I suggest you visit before lunch since they sell out quickly.

Directions from Aylmer: Following Highway 148, Shawville is approximately 60 kilometers from the Allumettieres junction (formerly McConnell-Laramée) in Aylmer.

Once in Shawville, look for the sign "**Beans Garage**".

Turn right, then proceed to the first set of lights.

Turn left, and the café is on your immediate right. Phone # 819-647-6424

June Social

After discussing a few ideas, it was decided that we'd have lunch at Algonquin College's, "Restaurant International" on Tuesday, June 2nd. The three courses are planned, prepared, and served by the culinary students at a cost of approximately \$23.00. Depending on the chef you may have a choice in each of the courses: Appetizer, Main Entrée, and Dessert. Coffee/tea, taxes, and gratuities are included. Numbers will have to be verified at the May 19th meeting/luncheon in order to confirm our reservations with a 25% deposit. Lunch is served at 12:30. There's a good amount of parking, but, the restaurant will be a full capacity of 120 that day, so, car pooling would be a great idea. We can discuss this at our May meeting in Shawville.

A few chuckles: (submitted by Marlene Brennan)

1. A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
2. The nice part of living in a small town is that when I don't know what I'm doing, someone else does!
3. We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are dull, some are pretty, some have weird names, and all are different colours, but, they all have to learn to live in the same box.

Wishing all of you a very "Happy Easter"... Angela

THE TEACHER APPLICANT (submitted by Marilyn Desabrais)

After being interviewed by the school administration, the teaching prospect said, "Let me see if I've got this right:

You want me to... go into that room with all those kids,

1. correct their disruptive behaviour,
2. observe them for signs of abuse,
3. monitor their dress habits,
4. censor their T-shirt messages,

5. and instil in them a love for learning.

You want me to...

6 - check their backpacks for weapons,

7 - wage war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, and

8 - raise their sense of self-esteem and personal pride.

You want me to...

9 - teach them patriotism and good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, and

10 - how to register to vote,

11 - balance a chequebook, and

12 - apply for a job.

You want me to...

13 - check their heads for lice,

14 - recognize signs of anti-social behaviour, and

15 - make sure that they all pass the state exams.

You also want me to...

16 - provide them with an equal education regardless of their handicaps, and

17 - communicate regularly with their parents by letter, telephone, conferences, email, homework hotline, web page, midterm newsletters, and report card.

You want me to do all this with a piece of chalk, a blackboard, a bulletin board, a few books, a big smile, and a starting salary that qualifies me for food stamps.

You want me to do all this and then you tell me, "I CAN'T PRAY?" Are you

SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER

Welcome Spring. At long last, the winter season is now over and we can look forward to the arrival of the beautiful season of spring which is already evidenced by warmer temperatures accompanied with the emergence of colourful crocuses. This will soon be followed by a host of golden daffodils and a little later with myriad colours of tulips.

It is now time for all those green thumb enthusiasts to be immersed in gardening once again

Our Chapter members are invited to join a tour to Ottawa for the Tulip Festival on Wednesday May 13, 2009. Bob sent out a detailed itinerary of the trip via our Chapter News Letter to our members on March 28th. Early booking for the event is most advisable.

Travelling arrangements for the members of our Chapter to join the coach will be made at our next meeting. A car pool is advised.

On March 25th, twenty five members of our Chapter in collaboration with members of the South Shore Women's University Club had a most enjoyable time at a Caban de Sucre event in Mt Gregoire in the Eastern Townships. The beautiful weather added to the ambiance of a very enjoyable spring outing. Once again our sincere thanks to Marylin Zaslowsky the Coordinator of the Dining Out Club for organizing the event.

Guest Speaker

At our regular meeting on April 16th, three officials from Service Canada/Human Resources will speak to us on some very important services that impact on Seniors such as: Old Age Security, Pensions, Guaranteed Supplement Income, Allowance for Survivor Programme, Canadian Pension or Quebec Pension, Compassionate Benefits etc. There will be a question and answer period. Printed information forms will be also distributed to our members at the meeting. Organizing this event took some time; hence I am expecting a large gathering at the meeting. Remember also that the programmes listed impinge on the daily lives of retirees; hence your attendance is vitally important.

Some more important news

The Quebec rebate for home services for people over seventy and older has been in place since 2007. However, for the 2008 tax year, the refundable tax credit is 30% of eligible expenses up to \$15,600, for a maximum of \$468.00 a year. For home owners eligible costs include such things as outside and inside cleaning, personal care, laundry services, nursing, tree pruning, rug and air duct cleaning, chimney sweep, awn care even outside pool maintenance.

Only services provided by outside companies and individuals are eligible. Work done by spouses and independents do not count.

Residents and apartments, condos, and senior citizens homes are eligible to deduct a portion of their rent and condo fees as spelled out at the Revenue Quebec Department. Please check out the above mentioned benefits to which you are entitled.

Our Chapter extends congratulations to Bob and Monique on becoming grand parents for the second time. Baby Isabelle was born on March 12th, at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie Ontario. Both mother and baby are doing very well.

I also wish to remind each of our members to keep in their thoughts and prayers the mother of Henriette Ayres, Patrick O'Malley and Bill Zaslowsky respectively who are ill.

Annual General Meeting

As we approach the date of the AGM on May 14th, 2009, I wish to remind each member that nominations for the vacant posts of President and Vice President respectively will be entertained. Please submit the names of your choice to fill the vacancies to Joan Crossley the Nominations Officer on or before the date of the AGM. Joan can be reached at 450-671-4726.

Following the election of officers for the Executive Board there will be the usual AGM Luncheon. The arrangement and format of the Luncheon will be discussed at the meeting of April 16th.2009. I therefore, look forward to seeing all of our ninety one members; yes we now have ninety one financial members in our chapter, at the AGM.

At this juncture of this Chapter News Letter, permit me to wish you and yours a happy and glorious Easter season. Irrespective of your religious or irreligious persuasion, Easter is a time of joy and hope, and a time of new life. May each of you be blessed with the joys of the Resurrection to new life and the rebirth of nature which Spring brings to our hearts.

A very Happy Easter to you all, from my family, and I to you and yours.

Meeting dates;

1. Regular meeting on April 16.200
2. Annual General Meeting May 14.2009.

Some more St. Patrick's Day pictures



HAVE A HAPPY EASTER