



News en Ville

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A newsletter published for and by the residents,
staff, volunteers and supporters of L'Abri en Ville
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Coordinators' Corner

Delightful haven to be next year's campsite By Loraine Jacmain

Sometimes out of a seemingly everyday event, an exciting new possibility arises. With the help of happy coincidence, that is exactly what happened after a group of 18 residents, volunteers and coordinators went on a day outing to Île Saint-Bernard in Châteauguay in August.

The island is a 30-minute drive from Montreal and the home of an exceptional natural heritage and cultural resource. Though it was a cold and windy day, we went on a pontoon cruise on the Châteauguay River with a nature guide, discovering the rich history of Île Saint-Bernard and learning about the island's wildlife and plants. We saw a variety of birds, including herons and ducks, turtles and even a white-tailed deer. Breaking into small groups we walked along the riverbank, in the orchard, to the old mill and on trails.

We visited the Manoir d'Youville, formerly a summer residence of the Grey Nuns and now a 120-room hotel with breathtaking views, and imagined how nice and comfortable it would be if we could stay there overnight. To warm up we gathered at a restaurant that served good coffee and tea, light meals and desserts. Everyone came back from this outing relaxed and enchanted by this calm natural environment.

Then a week later, the most amazing thing happened. Several phone messages and emails had come in to the office from the Centre de Croissance Compagnon, a two-year old organization we had not heard of before. It turns out the mission of this group is to make available vacations and job training to people with mental or physical handicaps – and the vacations would be at their Manoir on Île Saint-Bernard!

Without knowing we had just visited that very spot, they had recently become aware of L'Abri and offered to pay half of our expenses if we book into the



Stone mill on Île Saint-Bernard dates from 1686

Manoir d'Youville. Included would be meals, lodging, a heated outdoor swimming pool with a lifeguard, access to boats and kayaks, and all the trails. We can book anytime – even during summer!

As an alternative to our usual Laurentian camp weekend after Labour Day, we have already booked a two-day stay in August 2015, and look forward to enjoying the charms of beautiful Île Saint-Bernard.

For photos of our visit to the island, see P. 6.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Citrus Pick-up

Monday, December 1 & Tuesday, December 2 from 2-8pm

Holiday Party for the L'Abri community

Monday, December 8

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Presidents' Report

Settling in, moving ahead, reaching out By Gael Eakin and Dale MacDonald

This is the first report from the two of us, who are settling in and learning the ropes of directing the board. Much is happening at L'Abri. We have re-opened a tenth apartment with three new residents. We had to close an NDG apartment due to poor maintenance, and because one resident needed more care and the others were moving on. We found a lovely new place in LaSalle.

We have updated the office with new computers and a printer. To their relief, our staff can now work more efficiently.

Camp Weredale started off in the pouring rain, but the weather cleared by noon. We walked in the woods, paddled canoes, played games and basked in the sun. A new cook made delicious meals, and we ended the day with a sing-song around the campfire in the light of a full moon. Everyone liked the new format of two days and just one night away from home.

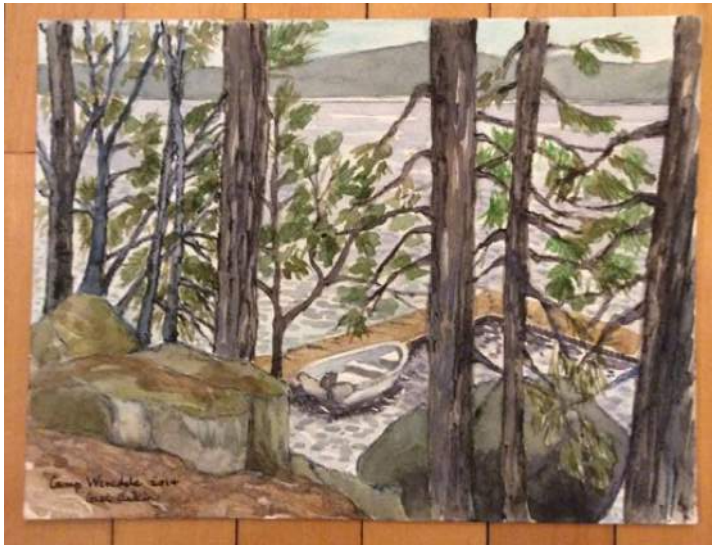
Our finances are always a concern, and we are reassessing our fundraising methods. We have been



Dale and Gael at the L'Abri office

through personal contact that we can raise the most money. In fact most of our L'Abri fundraising has been on a personal level. That is our strength!

We welcome volunteers of all ages. An age group that is especially appreciated as volunteers - the teams that support each apartment of three residents - is individuals whose children have left home, or who are newly retired. They have a combination of vitality and experience that fits nicely with our mission of supporting residents and opening new horizons. L'Abri is a warm, wonderful organization. Everlasting friendships are formed and endure. We welcome all who would like to join us!



Gael painted this lovely scene at camp in September

professionally advised to draw up a five-year plan, which we need help to set up. The idea would be to train our volunteers to take on the work, justifying any initial costs. Recruiting volunteers for this task is crucial. It is

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Unseen hands

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Help & advice: Nancy Grayson, Denise Hudon, Marjorie Sharp

Residents make brave new starts By Sue Purcell

The past year has seen several L'Abri residents start new projects. Changing course can be challenging – It may require learning new processes, adjusting to a different schedule or getting used to unfamiliar people. The following residents are glad they made the leap.

Marie-Josée, from the Brasilia apartment in NDG, did psychology research in university, before she was struck by mental illness. Now, many years later, she has transformed her life and is enrolled at Forward House, where her love of science has been revived.

She's taking science and technology ("an amazing class"), biography and geography. There are about ten in each group and the atmosphere is casual.

In biography, each class member suggests someone they'd like to learn about, then the whole group votes. "We did Stevie Wonder. Then we saw several Robin Williams films. He's a real one-man show." In geography



they learned about Katmandu and other spots.

"I couldn't go back to university," she adds. "The medication affects my memory." But her new classes keep her motivated. "It's important to stay in contact with reality around the world, and with people," she explains. "I'm curious, and I love to learn. It completes me."

Pierre, from the Jolicoeur apartment in Ville Emard, had for years helped the community group Amitié-Friendship, by using his car to drive letters and packages to partner groups in the field of mental illness. He was on call five days a week. When he gave up his car this year, they asked him to continue doing his job – but by bus and metro!

Pierre is happy with the change. "C'est le fun... c'est relaxe. Et je fais de l'exercice," he says. "My weight has dropped from 240 pounds to 219." Bravo Pierre!

Krista, who lives in the new LaSalle apartment, has been working since August at a gift shop in the Wellington

Community Centre in Verdun. The centre trained her to deal with customers and work the cash register under the Quebec government's PAAS-Action employability program.

A bright cheery storefront a few blocks from de l'Eglise metro, the shop offers

items made by people with mental illness – jewelry, pillows, woven wraps, kids and babies' clothes, cards and wooden items. Krista is proud that the shop's treasures include her own naive art painting of pink and yellow flamingos.

She's glad to have the job, and enjoys meeting customers. "People come in off the street," she says. The hardest part? She wishes there were more of them. "It's definitely quiet."

Stéfan, one of Pierre's roommates, works at home several hours a day teaching himself the Linux computer operating system. He hopes to go back to his previous work as a systems engineer.

"It takes discipline and concentration," he says, adding it's important to take a couple of breaks to walk outdoors. Sometimes he has trouble waking up, but he says "If I sleep in, I just work later."



Camp



RESIDENT LIFE

A perfect day By Anna Drienovsky

Bright and early on a beautiful summer morning, our volunteers drove my roommates and me to St-Benoît-du-Lac for an outing. As we arrived, the abbey appeared like a fairy-tale castle! As we descended the hall to the church, plaques on the walls told the history of the church, the foundation and beliefs of the Benedictine order, their role in Quebec society, and how the abbey proceeds in its daily duties and obligations.

When we entered the chapel for Mass, pious monks led the way to worship. Later, at the shop where the monks sell their products, we all bought something to take home. At lunchtime, we picnicked outside on the grass in the hot sun.

After lunch our volunteers drove us to a factory outlet in Magog, where we shopped for inexpensive items. I was pleased and amazed at the quaint beauty of Main Street in Magog.

Our final stop was in Knowlton, at the home of our former co-ordinator Marianne. We were greeted warmly, and some of us cooled off by taking a swim in her outdoor pool. At suppertime we gathered outside for a barbecue in her spacious garden.

Time to leave. We said our goodbyes and felt sure we would return.

What a wonderful outing! It couldn't be better – a hot summer's day, riding in an air-conditioned car, filled with the memories of good food, pleasant surroundings and a fun time with people you love!

Walk for Mental Health



The Bassetts: There from the start, still ready to help By Sandra Baines

Members of the Unitarian Church in downtown Montreal, Bob and Mary Bassett in the early nineties were among the first to hear about plans to open an apartment for individuals diagnosed with mental illness who needed not only a secure place to live, but also a community of support. This led to the founding of L'Abri en Ville.

Bob, a financial planner by profession, stepped up and offered his services as treasurer of a newly-established board of directors. Mary was among those who searched for the first apartment, and found donors to provide household furnishings. Their daughter Karen was one of the three first residents, and she continues to call L'Abri home.

Bob and Mary's involvement with L'Abri flourished from there. Bob not only served on the board for many years, but he became an apartment volunteer, a friend to the residents of the Addington (later called Lafayette) apartment in NDG. Bob is a key member of the volunteer team there. Mary shares in the fun. With the residents and the other volunteers, they gather regularly for potluck

dinner to celebrate birthdays, or just for the pleasure of being together. They have hosted get-togethers both at their apartment in Westmount and at the country home in the Eastern Townships. Bob and Mary go on regular apartment

outings to the Atwater Market for a little shopping and a nice cup of coffee. Bob says he has always enjoyed the good times they have had with the residents and other volunteers.

Mary has for years been a champion salesperson for our annual citrus fruit fund-raiser. Her list of customers is known to be extensive, and only this year has she given up the daunting task of contacting all of them to take their orders. Although her list has been divided among several willing volunteers, she fully intends to be the one to remind any of those who have not picked up their oranges and grapefruit to do so!

When asked about the Bassetts' contribution to L'Abri, former coordinator Marianne Metrakos had this to say: "Bob and Mary are shining examples of how reaching out to persons who might be isolated can change and enrich the lives of everyone involved. They played an important role in getting L'Abri en Ville started and continue as apartment volunteers where they have formed lasting friendships with the residents and volunteers alike."



A thoroughly enjoyable fundraiser By Jerome Kierans

In mid-October, Joan Esar and I attended a fundraising dinner for our sister organization, Les toits d'Emile. On our way Joan took the long scenic road by the south shore of Lac Saint-Louis. She showed me her summer home and we arrived early at the Salles du Boisé in Châteauguay.

We shared a table with two couples from Saint-Chrysostome. This is where a friend of mine from work lives!

The business people and dignitaries from western Montérégie were delightful, including the president of the Chamber of Commerce. We were greeted by Corina Pal, coordinator of Les toits, Louise Bruchési, the president,

and M. Bruchési Sr, the co-founder. L'Abri en Ville was mentioned as the other co-founder.

I enjoyed being with Joan. She is a fabulous artist and teacher and has a nice dog named Luna that she loves very much. Joan is quite successful at raising money in citrus sales every year. She also takes part in our card workshop and is interested in other revenue-generating projects for residents.

The supper included squash soup and rack of pork. There was a raffle and door prizes. I won tickets to an organ recital at Châteauguay's St. Andrew's Church.

Thanks to Eleanor and Audrey for the dinner tickets. It was a wonderful evening.



Fresh air and exercise at lovely Île Saint-Bernard



Denise Hudon: Une femme de talent nous rejoint Par Raymonde Hachey

Depuis quelque temps, une femme souriante vous accueille lorsque vous entrez à L'Abri. Il s'agit de Denise Hudon, la nouvelle assistante administrative.

C'est lors d'une entrevue qu'elle nous confie son parcours. Ses talents en arts plastiques et graphiques l'ont amenée à travailler dans divers domaines tels la naturopathie, la santé naturelle et holistique et l'agriculture urbaine. De plus, ce parcours l'a menée à s'impliquer dans divers organismes communautaires tels que la Patate du Peuple à l'Université Concordia. Pendant ce temps, elle poursuivait des études à temps partiel tout en s'occupant de la fermette familiale. A la suite d'un accident, elle décide de déménager à Montréal et de rechercher un emploi.

C'est en visionnant le site web de L'Abri qu'elle a un coup de cœur. La structure et le projet de diffusion du modèle de L'Abri

collent avec ses valeurs. Ses habiletés dans les relations interpersonnelles et de leadership ainsi que ses connaissances technologiques font d'elle une excellente candidate pour le poste.

Elle se sent accueillie à bras ouverts car le soutien moral, la compréhension et le statut égalitaire qui prévalent à L'Abri font qu'elle est très confortable dans son nouvel emploi. De plus, elle aime le milieu paisible et humanitaire, l'atmosphère de coopération et non de compétition ainsi que la communication entre les membres de l'équipe et les attentes claires qui se dégagent. Selon elle, c'est un réel travail d'équipe où tous se dirigent vers un but commun et son sentiment d'appartenance se fait déjà sentir. En d'autres mots, c'est : « L'Unité dans la Diversité ». Pour elle c'est « le bonheur inespéré ». Son vœu le plus cher est de demeurer longtemps parmi nous.

Bienvenue Denise dans la grande famille de L'Abri en Ville!



Marjorie Sharp

A leader in care for the vulnerable By Sue Purcell

L'Abri en Ville celebrated in September when long-time volunteer Marjorie Sharp was presented with the Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Service Award by the Quebec Community Groups Network.

"It's wonderful," says Marjorie of the award. "I was very surprised. I don't feel I deserve it." We think she does: A retired lawyer, she helped found L'Abri 23 years ago, and remains a volunteer at the Park apartment and a member of our advisory council.



She's popular with our residents for offering them tours of new exhibits at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Marjorie helped found Auberge Madeleine for battered women and Elder-Aide for seniors. She was on the board of the YWCA, where she lived on arrival here from England as a girl. After working as a secretary at a local law firm, she got her bachelor of arts and at age 40, entered law school. She remains active in social service at Christ Church Cathedral, where she recently helped organize a full-course dinner for 200 street people. Will she slow down soon? Not likely. "Slow down?" she says. "What would I do with myself?"



Volunteers left a legacy of kindness



and serving these hams to the L'Abri community. He was a great friend and role model to the residents. We will miss him very much.

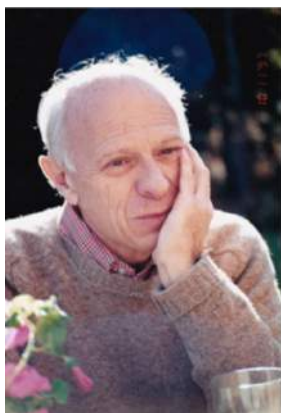
In September, we mourned the death of Claude Moisan, a long-time volunteer at the Benny apartment. He took the men in that apartment shopping every week and then for a coffee – an outing everyone enjoyed. At the Holiday Party, Claude brought in a delicious ham each year cooked by his wife Connie. He was in charge of carving

Rhoda Cohen passed away in April. She joined L'Abri in 2001 with other members of the Reconstructionist Synagogue, forming the first volunteer team for the new Crescent apartment in NDG. Armand recalls that on his first day at L'Abri, Rhoda took him and his new roommates out to a restaurant. "It was incredible," he recalls. "It gave me a notion of what L'Abri can do for me." When Alzheimer's began to take its toll a few years ago, Armand reached out by phoning Rhoda once a week. Which is what L'Abri is all about!



Donations made in memory and in honour

In Memory of Claude Moisan



Allan Aitken

Robert and Mary Bassett

Audrey Bean

Diana Bennett

Janet Dench

Nancy Grayson

Anne Gregory

George Harris

Gwen Harris

Michael St. B. Harrison

Edward W. Keyserlingk

Jack and Alice London

Louise G. McNamara

MRRM Inc. (formerly Mount

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Riccardo Ottoni

Sharyn Scott

David Seymour

Juliet Wait

Mary H. Williams

In Memory of Roni Gerstel

Simco

Dina, Jack and David Finzi

Marcia Kovits

Juan H. Vera and Grazyna

Wilczek

In Memory of Rhoda Cohen

Juan H. Vera and Grazyna

Wilczek

Suzanne Herscovitch

In Memory of Dennis Vossos
Eleanor Beattie

In Memory of Norman
McLaren
Grant Munro

In Memory of Christine Ruiz
Fiona Campbell

In Memory of Mary E.
Quinlan
Audrey H. McLeod
William Quinlan
Virginia H. Stikeman

In Memory of Heather
D'Souza
Suzanne Herscovitch

In Memory of Elizabeth
Tremain
James Tremain
Mary K. Bassett

In Memory of Clare
Fellowes
Barbara Chapman

In Memory of Guy Strudwick
John Strudwick

In Memory of Colin K. Irving
Hon. Pierre Boudreault

In Memory of Michael
Branchard
Arthur C. O'Connell

In Memory of Bob Purcell
Sue Purcell



In Honour of Eleanor Beattie
Eric Philips-Oxford

In Honour of John Gall
Eleanor Beattie

In Honour of Sharyn Scott
Joanne Cameron

In Honour of Karen Bassett
and Eileen Kelly
Dr. Joanne C. Walford

In Honour of Connie and
Claude Moisan
Nicola Reford

In Honour of Marianne
Metrakos
Uwe and Ruth Natho

In Honour of David Hogarth
Donald and Mary Hogarth

In Honour of Steven Roy
Macdonald
Dr. Allison D. Macdonald

In Honour of Greta Liebel's
90th birthday
Barbara Kelly and Paul Nichols

In Honour of Mary Martha
Guy
Dr. Ann C. Macaulay

In Honour of Eli
Bonnie Shemie

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