



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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Hand-painted decorations light up the holiday season By Eileen Kelly

This past summer, Joan Esar, a volunteer, and a small group of residents (Eileen, Karen, Beverley, Anna, Marie-Josée and Rick) started a new fund-raising project – painting glass Christmas balls.

In the beginning we were going to paint drinking glasses, but decided tree balls would be more practical.



Each ball is unique. Each artist has his or her own style which makes for an array of colourful balls. We use a special paint and the balls are baked for a short duration so that they don't scratch. The paint is applied mainly on the outside but can also be applied on the inside.

Decorations can also be placed on the inside.

One of the challenges we faced was waiting for the paint to dry and trying not to smudge the paint. With each session, we became more adept at handling the balls. The residents put in a lot of effort, but also had fun working on the project at Joan's cottage and in the L'Abri office.



We will be selling them at the citrus sale Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, to raise money for our resident activity fund. We hope to make a nice profit, so we encourage the L'Abri community, and our families and friends, to support our endeavour.



Carol De Koven

Long-time board member, still a valued citrus organizer By Sue Purcell

Carol De Koven has been a valuable asset to L'Abri both as a board member and as coordinator of our annual citrus fundraiser. In spring after 20 years, she stepped down from the board, where her business acumen has been much appreciated. Fortunately, she continues to play a vital part in the citrus campaign, which she ushered through its awkward early years.

Back in the 90s, orders pouring into the office throughout October were handwritten. Few volunteers had home computers. The phone rang off the hook with additions and changes. There was no email, no Excel program and minimal office help.

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FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Citrus Pick-up

Monday, November 30 and
 Tuesday, December 1 from 2 to 8 pm

Holiday Party for the L'Abri community

Thursday, December 10

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, March 15

Presidents' Report

Fixing facets of L'Abri for the future

By Dale MacDonald and Gael Eakin

Over the past year or so we have been considering how L'Abri en Ville might operate more effectively. We can no longer count on volunteer-run committees to carry the lion's share of responsibility in some areas. Competition for new volunteers is great, as mature adults' busy lives allow for less free time. After months of brainstorming by our executive, staff and board, we have made some important changes aimed at reshaping our organization to face the future.

At the office level, our Lead Coordinator Cheryl Lafferty has agreed to take on more administrative responsibilities -- including an active role in fund-raising, and management of apartment expenses -- as our new Executive Director. Since her workload is considerable, it was agreed she would give up her role overseeing residents of two of our ten apartments, which will pass to our hard-working coordinators Cathy and Loraine, now relieved of certain other tasks. Cheryl will continue to take part in interviewing prospective residents, and in major decisions involving them.

With the advanced computer skills and longer hours of our office administrator Denise, we now have efficient systems for applying

to foundations for funds, keeping track of citrus orders and getting receipts out to donors. Meanwhile to keep costs down, we have let go the small room next door to our main office in the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex, thinning and consolidating into our main office space.

In addition, we have altered the structure of our board and executive, streamlined the number of meetings and simplified agendas. We have decreased the number of board meetings to six, plus an annual retreat in June, while maintaining the same number of executive meetings. This frees up time for board members to become actively involved in working committees.

Chairs of finance and personnel and a fund-raising rep are now members of our executive council. (Fund-raising is currently being handled by a small committee as we search for a new committee head.) Chairs of other committees will be invited to executive meetings as needed. The full board will of course be informed and consulted as always.

We are confident that all these changes will add up to a more efficient L'Abri en Ville.

Carol and her team ensure citrus pick-up runs smoothly

Continued from P. 1

Carol had the know-how to streamline our data processing. With two degrees in computer science, she was able to set up and format customer lists that could be updated, printed out and given to agents each year.

"Piles of order sheets were delivered to my house. I'd be entering the orders on my computer at home. The phone would ring early in the morning: 'So-and-so has changed their order'," Carol recalls with a smile. It's hard to imagine how they managed, with Susan (our former secretary) only working one day a week!

Nowadays citrus orders are handled by the office, while the citrus committee organizes every detail for the two pick-up days at Mountainside United -- organizing strong helpers such as the Concordia Stingers hockey team, who unload tons of boxes from the huge truck when it arrives, enlisting volunteers to cross off customers' names, setting up



Eleanor and Carol (rt.) after the last box of fruit was sold last year.

tarps on the floor where the fruit will be stacked, and making sure there's plenty of pizza, cookies and coffee for the workers.

Carol's outreach to schools such as Loyola and Selwyn House "has been a lifeline", says Marianne Metrakos, our former coordinator now retired to the Townships. (Always central to planning the citrus sale, Marianne still comes to town each year to help organize the pick-up.)

The private school boys do a great job hoisting boxes and placing them in cars in the after-school hours. Volunteers and residents used to help load before the students arrived, but with advancing age many are no longer able. So Carol and her committee are issuing an appeal to strong-armed supporters to contribute a few hours in the afternoon.

Can you or someone in your family come by Mountainside United at Lansdowne and The Boulevard from 2 to 5 p.m. on Nov. 30 or Dec. 1, to help lift boxes of fruit? If so, call L'Abri at the number above. Your help will be greatly appreciated!

Montreal Walks for Mental Health Foundation grant

Cooler summer ahead for lucky l'Abri residents By Cecily Lawson

It was mild on Sunday, October 4th when over 1000 people gathered in Phillip's Square for the annual Montreal Walks for Mental Health event. This walk was the group's seventh and it was a special one for L'Abri en Ville.

After the walkers paraded through the downtown streets, many returned to Phillip's Square where a series of presentations was made to groups who had qualified to receive grants from the Montreal Walks for Mental Health Foundation, which is supported by corporate sponsors, individual donors and walkers. L'Abri was one of these groups and we received a cheque for \$4,500.

The grant will be used to furnish our apartments with air conditioners, in the wake of concerns about the health of many of our residents during last year's hot spells. A government health agency has warned that people with mental health problems are more vulnerable to the effects of heat than the general population. Several of our people live in apartments that become very hot during the summer, and the effects of the heat are even worse for those who suffer from physical problems such as asthma, COPD and cardiac disease.



Cheryl and Jerome accept the cheque as L'Abri family members look on. To right of Jerome are Suzanne Herscovitch and Paul Aubin of Montreal Walks.

Montreal Walks for Mental Health was the brainchild of L'Abri board member Suzanne Herscovitch. She conceived of it as a way of fighting the stigma against mental illness, and providing a means of raising funds for organizations devoted to helping people with mental illness. The first group that she approached was L'Abri, and when the response was positive she quickly recruited other Montreal organizations. The first walk was held in 2009. It took place in Cote St-Luc starting at Pierre Elliot Trudeau Park, and attracted 300 walkers. The organizers knew then that they had a winner on their hands. The following year they moved the event downtown to Phillip's Square, and participation quickly grew to where it is today.

Members of the L'Abri community have been part of this great project from the beginning. Many have served on the organizing committee and several residents and volunteers not only participate in the L'Abri contingent on walk day, but also seek out sponsors for the event.

Suzanne Herscovitch is still actively involved as a member of the organizing committee. She sums it up saying "It's all about mental health."

Unseen hands

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L'Abri family album



Picnic



Walk



An open letter from a long-time L'Abri volunteer who will miss us

May 12, 2015

I wanted to write to all the residents, volunteers and staff as I plan my move to Victoria, B.C., after a lifetime in Quebec. My children will both be settled out West thus my decision to move, despite the sense of loss I feel leaving my many friends and activities in Montreal.

L'Abri poses one of the more difficult goodbyes I have had to deal with, particularly my relationship with George, Rick and David. My connection with L'Abri dates back to the very beginning of the project. Seeing it evolve over the many years has been an inspiration and truly a personally enriching and rewarding time. The memories I will cherish are numerous, from the early development process, to housecleaning and



laundry duties, to barbeques at the farm, presentations with residents at universities and many, many more.

I will forever value my involvement with L'Abri and wish to express my admiration of all the caring volunteers, the committed coordinators and especially the residents, who touched me deeply.

I know L'Abri will continue to be a powerful presence in the community and look forward to keeping in touch.

Sincerest wishes,
Nancy (Montgomery)



Bishop's



Hallowe'en!



Doux souvenirs d'une femme speciale

Par Jerome Kierans

Alors que l'été avait à peine commencé, L'Abri en Ville a perdu l'une des plus belles fleurs qu'il a jamais eues. Raymonde Hachey, ancienne co-présidente avec Audrey Bean, a joué un rôle très important dans nos vies.

Volontaire au sein de l'appartement Bessborough, elle participait dans une gamme d'activités, dont nous accompagnait à l'épicerie, et nous conduire au besoin à la clinique.

Elle nous accueillait chaque année pour fêter mon anniversaire et pour des barbecues dans son jardin.

La communauté de L'Abri en Ville a beaucoup apprécié la générosité de Raymonde qui servait comme dirigeante de la chorale du temps des Fêtes. La musique qui animait notre grand souper communautaire était le fruit d'un grand effort et par elle et par ses chanteurs.

L'unique francophone à jamais occuper la poste de co-présidente de notre organisme, elle nous déchiffrait les complexités de certaines tâches administratives, et

encourageait toujours l'entrée et le confort des francophones à L'Abri.

Raymonde a toujours eu l'idée de créer un lieu sécuritaire pour les résidents de L'Abri en Ville. C'était

en accord avec les valeurs de sa profession d'ergothérapie. Professeure retraitée dans cette discipline, elle a travaillé à l'Université de Montréal et à l'Institut Allan Memorial, entre autres.

Raymonde aimait beaucoup le voyage, ayant voyagé en Italie et au Vietnam. Elle jouait au bridge et chantait dans le chœur de son église à la chapelle Loyola.

Il ne faut pas non plus oublier l'amour qu'elle avait pour sa mère. Celle-ci est restée en vie jusqu'à son centenaire, en grande partie grâce à l'attention et du dévouement de Raymonde. Les deux sont décédées dans l'espace d'une semaine, et sont enterrées ensemble.

Bien que Raymonde ne soit plus, sa jolie voix réverbère toujours dans nos cœurs.



Loraine avec Raymonde (à droite) à notre party de 20e anniversaire

Film-maker draws on own experience with bipolar disorder By Sandra Baines

Au Contraire is a film festival on mental illness that took place in late October. The bilingual festival founded by Philip and Barbara Silverberg received 400 submissions from around the world from which eleven were chosen, touching on many facets of mental illness. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is a partner in the festival, through its Sharing the Museum initiative.

Established three years ago with the goal of breaking down the stigma of mental illness, the festival this year included the feature-length film

Touched by Fire, starring Katie Holmes and Luke Kirby. Writer and director Paul Dalio drew on his personal experience living with bipolar disorder, to tell the story of two young poets who meet and fall in love while being treated for psychiatric illnesses.

Responding to questions after the screening, Dalio described his own journey, from sudden heightened energy and creativity to severe depression. His symptoms first emerged when he was studying at

New York University's film school. His treatment evolved over a four-year period, including several inpatient psychiatric stays. He remains in good health now, his illness managed by medication and close medical follow-up. He and his wife, Kristina Nikolova (the film's cinematographer) live in New York with their two young children.

Touched by Fire will open in theatres across Canada and the United States in February. Watch for it!

Notes from the Office

Weatherman cooperates, outdoor activities a big success By Cheryl Lafferty

As tax time approaches, we'd like to remind our donors to give us your email address, so we can send you your tax receipts online. Of course you are under no obligation, and can still receive them by regular mail, but making the switch will save us time, expense and effort. Please indicate too, if you'd like to receive this newsletter in full colour online. Just write us at info@labrienville.org, making sure to include your name, if it is not obvious from your email address.

Cathy, Loraine, Cheryl and Denise have kept busy in the office and elsewhere since our last newsletter. June had us planning for both a games night for the residents and a strategic planning meeting for the organization. Both events were fun and with people we enjoy being with, but with different goals in mind: one activity to relax and one to generate ideas for L'Abri's future.

In July we tried to hold our annual Parc Angrignon picnic but the weather was most uncooperative. After three tries, we postponed it until September -- when we actually had perfect fall weather, with a great turnout by both residents and volunteers.

A big change this year was having a two-night getaway at Ile St-Bernard, which was enjoyed by all. We had 28 participants, including

residents, volunteers and staff. A return visit is already in the works!

September brought us back to board meetings and McGill student supervising. We have with us this year Barbora Macikova, a second-year social work student. Barbora attended the annual McGill Volunteer Fair on our behalf, along with some residents and volunteers. This was L'Abri's first time at the Fair, where approximately 90 organizations were represented, and many students expressed interest in L'Abri. Thanks to Suzanne Herscovitch, Rick Ottoni, Jerome Kierans, Gregory Rodd, Sue Purcell and of course Barbora.

As October came to an end, we enjoyed the Au Contraire Film Festival and the Low-Beer Lecture, which this year discussed, "What's Next for Psychiatry: Will People Get the Help They Really Need?". It's wonderful to have such a great information available to us here in Montreal.

November and December bring our citrus distribution days, and invitations to churches where residents and volunteers speak about our community, and sell our new painted Christmas balls and L'Abri calendars to go toward trips and outings for our residents. Whether you go to citrus pick-up or to a church that invites us, bring along some \$5 and \$10 bills so you won't miss out on these holiday treasures!

Comfortable island oasis a welcome change from camp By Terryann O'Neill

I think everyone would agree that our summer getaway this year was a welcome change, being held on two weekdays in mid-August instead of in chillier September, and in a new place. After many years going to a camp in the Laurentians after Labour Day, we went by bus to Ile St-Bernard in nearby Châteauguay. It's a lovely place with grassy areas, and chairs and old fashioned swings here and there, bordering on beautiful Lac St-Louis. The hotel is a former nuns' residence, clean and comfortable. Each room had a

ceiling fan, and my room had a nice breeze coming off the river at night.

The food was cafeteria-style. The choice was a bit limited but there was plenty of it, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. My favourite meal was breakfast which included eggs, bacon, sausages, pancakes, French toast, fresh fruit and oatmeal.

The first morning we went on a guided pontoon boat ride along the river. We saw birds, ducks and other animals. It was a little

gloomy that morning so there weren't as many creatures as there usually are. The guide spoke about the different species of animals and showed us different animal skins or pelts and made us guess what they were.

Later several residents went on a hike at the Nature Conservation Park. My roommate Eileen Kelly said it was a good workout. One activity I really liked was swimming at the outdoor heated pool. We were a small group but we really took advantage of the pool on both days. There was a coffee shop five or ten minutes walk from the hotel. I went a few times with different residents to get my fix of caffeine and just talk and relax.

Mostly we hung out on the grounds and just generally enjoyed ourselves. We went for short walks and saw a beautiful sunset Thursday evening. After supper some people watched old films, or played Scrabble or chess in the lobby.

On the whole, our summer getaway was a thumbs-up experience!



Remembering and honouring with gifts to L'Abri en Ville

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