

Packed schedules make for happy lives

By SUSAN PURCELL

Ever met someone so busy you can't imagine how they fit it all in? That's how I felt talking to Anna Drienovsky and Richard Beaudry about their daily lives.



ZSOFIA MACZO

ABOVE, ANNA HAS MANY INTERESTS, AND LOVES TO KEEP ACTIVE. AT RIGHT, RICHARD HAS BEEN HONING HIS CLARINET TECHNIQUE FOR 33 YEARS!



FREEPIK

Anna, a resident for most of L'Abri's 34 years, has always had plenty on the go. Back in the 90s she successfully completed a Bachelor's degree from Concordia University, and has always kept busy attending free cultural events around town. In the past year or so, she assumed a big new responsibility: cleaning, cooking and caring for her ailing brother, who is unable to get CLSC help. After four days at his home north of Montreal she returns to her LaSalle apartment, ready to rejoin the fray. Dashing around town for concerts, movies and art shows is no problem for Anna, a regular user of public transit. "Today I'm going to the bank and the watch repair", she told me recently. "I need to get groceries, and this weekend there's an antiquarian book fair at Concordia." Does all this tire her out? "It keeps me hopping", she chirps. And, between times, Anna does tai chi and always has a book on hand.

Richard attends a social centre in the Plateau area four days a week. He regularly works on embroidery and mosaics there, and sings in the choir. On Fridays he does aquafitness at a pool near his home in NDG. And every week – since 1992! – he takes a lesson in soprano clarinet. As if that's not enough, for ten years Richard has been enrolled in evening courses at a college in Montreal North. He's studied psychology, history, geography and global economy, but his real passion is gerontology—especially working in the field, helping to keep seniors active. As he puts it, "Je l'aime à la folie". Richard also loves to cook and watch TV with his roommates. But, "just to keep things in balance", he tries to save time for solitude.



ZSOFIA MACZO

Canada brought frigid weather, a new job direction

By CECILY LAWSON

L'ABRI EN VILLE has a new coordinator. **Zsafia Maczo** joined the staff in late August. A native of Hungary, Zsafia completed a Masters degree in cultural anthropology in Budapest. She emigrated to Canada in November 2012 to join her partner, whom she met doing field work in Boston. It was quite a shock to arrive here at the beginning of a true Canadian winter. "I felt like I had come to the North Pole," said Zsafia, but she loves Canada for its multicultural character and its thriving arts and cultural life.

In the first years after her arrival, Zsafia took on a number of volunteer positions. She worked with Face à Face, a community organization that supports homeless people, helping them to obtain welfare payments and providing services such as a telephone hotline. She also volunteered with the Centre des Femmes de Montreal

and was a member of an improv theatre company, The Montreal Playback Theatre. She returned to school to do a Bachelor's degree in social work at McGill, graduating in 2021. She then joined the staff of the Jewish General Hospital working as a social worker, first in the hospital's Institute of Community and Family Psychiatry, and later in the Geriatric and Internal Medicine Clinic, where she remained until coming to L'Abri.

"I like to feel I am doing something useful," Zsafia said. "At L'Abri I like the fact that there is a community, a feeling of family; people are close."

Zsafia is working part-time and has started with four apartments: three in LaSalle and one in NDG. She and her partner are now married and have a seven-year-old daughter.

CECILY IS IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT OF L'ABRI, AND AN APARTMENT VOLUNTEER



COURTESY OF Z. MACZO

Zsafia likes
the family feeling
at L'Abri



Notes from the office

A busy summer filled with change

By STAR GALE

Staff changes, updates to our banking policies and procedures and a long-awaited renovation of our heating and cooling system kept us busy in the offices this summer.

New coordinator

In July we bid farewell to **Leah Dagman**, one of our part-time coordinators, who returned to school to complete her Masters degree in social work. **Divine Ereka**, a Canada Summer Jobs student, supported the coordination of apartments until **Zsafia Maczo** joined the team in August. (See article above.)

Updated banking

Believe it or not, up until this summer L'Abri's banking was done the old-fashioned way, in person and on paper! The departure of our well-loved, long term treasurer **Sharyn Scott** was an opportunity to update our banking systems and our incoming treasurer **Gracy Pardillo** was up to the challenge. The attention to detail and care that such an overhaul requires was expertly handled by our talented office administrator **Sally Cooper**. We can't thank her enough.

Year-round comfort

We kept cool during the heat this summer thanks to renovations and updates to the office's heating and cooling system. This long-awaited project, a necessity as our previous system was no longer up to code, was coordinated by our talented board member **Richard Dufour** – thank you!

It's been a season of change for us, and we extend an invitation for our community members to reach out or drop by and keep up to date. Hopefully we'll see many of you at our holiday get-togethers in the winter months.

STAR IS L'ABRI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fix-it man François: a good guy to know

By CECILY LAWSON

RESIDENT François Brodeur has always enjoyed tinkering with things. When he was 11 years old a neighbour in Brossard, where he grew up, bought a used Nash Rambler (*similar to the one pictured here*) and François helped to dismantle and rebuild the car. At age 17, he began work as an electromechanical technician, installing, maintaining and repairing electric and electronic control systems used in a wide variety of equipment.



WIKIMEDIA

The work took him as far afield as Cuba where he was given the job of repairing the air conditioning system at Havana airport. Picked up at 4:30 AM to start his day, François

worked long hours and saw little of the popular holiday destination. He worked in this field until age 57, and retired about ten years ago.

For the past six years François has lived in one of our LaSalle apartments. Since joining us, he decided to give up smoking. Looking for ways to bolster his willpower, he zeroed in on the need to limit access to cigarettes. He then fashioned a lockbox which could hold a certain number of cigarettes, and be preset to open only at specific times for a short period. It can be programmed according to whatever schedule the user desires, but François believes that the optimum set up is to allow the box to open for one minute once an hour, from 8 AM to 9 PM. In the end he made two boxes and gave one to the kinesiologist who helped him to stop smoking, so she could share it with other clients.

François' interest in things mechanical extends beyond the lockbox. He has a small lab in his bedroom and repairs things for friends and neighbours. He recently took apart a neighbour's washing machine and put it back together again and, soon after, he was fixing a friend's television set. A good person to know!

CECILY IS L'ABRI'S IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
AND AN APARTMENT VOLUNTEER

The seasons set my moods

By GULAM SOHRAB



I love the outdoors in **summer**
there is truly nothing better
than the gold suns of dawn
and the grass and colors of my lawn



In **fall**,
I feel less proud and tall
I stay home more often
and wait for the times to soften



In **winter**, I never go out
I stay indoors to pout
I wait for the warm day



Wherever it's warm is where I stay
In **spring**, I finally step out
No longer indoors about
The birds hear my cry and return in haste
Leaving behind the land and waste

GULAM IS A POETIC RESIDENT!

FREEPIK

Queen of the costumes



SAM BEITEL

TERRYANN O'NEILL'S sassy purple look was a hit at L'Abri's recent Hallowe'en party. Several female residents turned up at our Duvernay street office in zany bands and coronets. The

guys eschewed dress-up, but sat down with the ladies to games of chess, bingo and cards, accompanied by spooky goodies and chips. Everyone headed for home with bags of ghostly treats, well before the little folks began their mischievous prowling.



FREEPIK

Gratitude served up at picnic

EVEN WITH an oppressive heat wave and poor air quality, 31 staff members, volunteers and residents, *at left, top*, had fun mingling at our mid-July picnic in Westmount Park.

Our catered lunch included sandwiches, salad, veggies and plenty of bottled water to keep everyone hydrated.

At left, attendees thanked volunteer **Richard Dufour** for his extensive work repairing and upgrading the apartments, and presented him with

a beautiful, handmade card he's sure to treasure. *Above*, roommates **Amina**, *left*, and **Rosmary**, *second from right*, in a quiet moment with volunteers **Ellen Moore** and **Wilma Goodman**.



STAR GALE



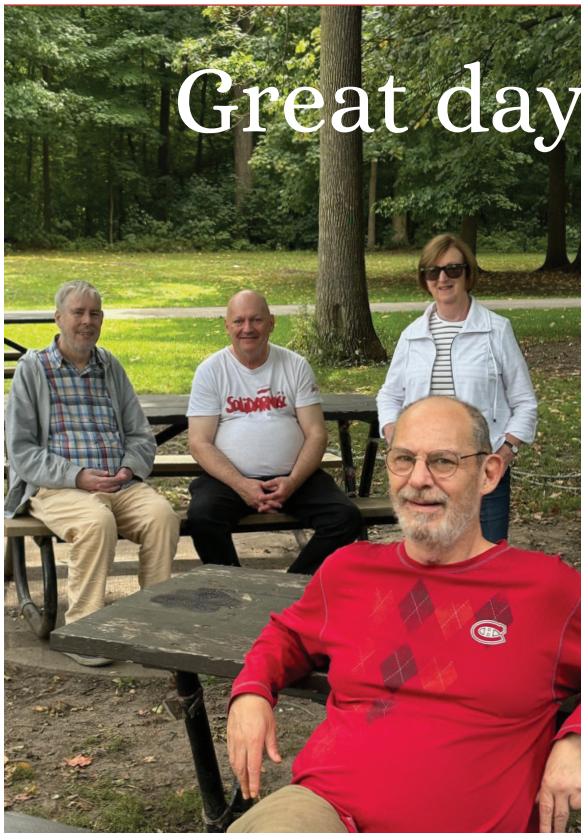
SAM BEITEL



STAR GALE

Great day for a cookout!

AT ANGRIGNON PARK, where majestic willows overhang the river and pesky geese roam the vast lawns, L'Abri holds an annual hotdog barbecue. On a sunny day in mid-September, 26 residents, staff members and volunteers turned up, most streaming in from the Angrignon metro station just minutes away. They easily located their group by following the aroma of roasting hot dogs to the barbecue area, where picnic tables bedecked with chips, veggies and cold drinks awaited. *At left*, residents **George**, **Jerome** and **David** chat with volunteer **Afric Eustace**. *At right*, volunteer **Maxene Rodrigues** gets the ketchup ready for use.



STAR GALE



STAR GALE



MICHELLE MILLS

MICHELLE MILLS

When city stresses fade from mind

CLIMBING FROM THE BUS each year at Manoir D'Youville on nearby Île-Saint-Bernard, residents let go of their worries and begin two days of laid-back leisure. Their August getaway on the shores of Lac Saint-Louis is a smorgasbord of bird-feeding, swimming in the outdoor pool, playing board games and mingling over delicious meals. *Above left*, resident **Vanessa** feeds a bird, and *right*, residents take in another spectacular sunset. *Below*, with south-west Montreal in the distance, volunteer **Brent**, *left*, and residents **Glenn**, **Anna** and **Howard** weave their way through the shore grass. The annual island stay is a highlight of summer.



SAM BEITEL

Another community kitchen favourite

A POPULAR FEATURE of our Duvernay St. office is its kitchen. It's allowed residents to meet every few months to try out new recipes together, learn new skills and broaden their cooking repertoire. At one of last summer's "kitchens", eggs, veggies and feta cheese took centre stage in this recipe:

Mediterranean veggie quiche

PREP IN 20-30 MINUTES | COOK IN 50 MINUTES | MAKES 8 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 frozen, deep-dish pie crust | 1 CUP chopped, packed spinach or kale |
| 2 TBSP oil or butter | 1 TSP oregano |
| 1 small onion, diced | Salt & pepper |
| 1/2 TSP fine sea salt | 6 large eggs |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced | 1/2 CUP milk |
| 1 medium tomato | 1/3 CUP crumbled feta cheese |
| 1 small zucchini, diced | 1/2 CUP shredded cheddar cheese |
| 1 CUP chopped mushrooms or bell pepper | |

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the frozen pie crust according to package directions. Preheat oven to 375 °F.

Heat oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add onion and a pinch of salt, and cook for 5 minutes. Add garlic, tomato, zucchini and mushrooms.

Cook another 10 minutes, or until veggies have softened. Add spinach, oregano, salt and pepper and cook 1-2 minutes, or until spinach wilts. Transfer veggies into the pie crust.

Whisk eggs, milk, feta and cheddar together in a medium bowl. Pour over veggies in uncooked pie crust. Top with an extra sprinkle of cheddar, if desired.

Bake 50-55 minutes, or until quiche has set. Allow quiche to cool for 15 minutes before slicing. *Bon appétit!*

~ From Hummusapien

MICHELLE MILLS



KAREN BASSETT LADLES THE SAVOURY QUICHE FILLING INTO PASTRY SHELLS, AS FELLOW RESIDENT GULAM SOHRAB LOOKS ON IN ANTICIPATION OF A DELICIOUS LUNCH

FREPIK



KATIE MCKENNA

Celebrating our editor

By STAR GALE

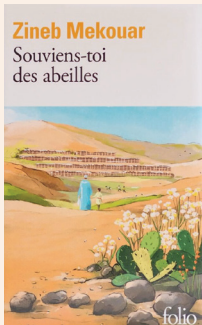
ON A SUNNY SATURDAY in June, we had the pleasure of celebrating the 80TH birthday of **Susan Purcell**, board member and long-time L'Abri Times editor. Though her birthday was in March, Sue's family and friends gathered in finer weather, to celebrate a life full of adventure and community connection. Sue's children and grandchildren welcomed dozens of her loved ones, including many from L'Abri. *Félicitations* Sue, we're lucky to have you!

L'ABRI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STAR GALE (LEFT) SHARED IN THE FESTIVITIES

Souviens-toi des abeilles

Par MARIE-JOSÉE PICHÉ

Ouvrage puissant d'une beauté étonnante



« SOUVIENS-TOI
DES ABEILLES »
ROMAN DE
ZINEB MEKOUAR
ÉD. GALLIMARD
166 PAGES (2024)

CE RÉCIT POÉTIQUE et chavirant se situe à Inzerki, un village au sud du Maroc où l'on vit d'apiculture grâce au rucher du Saint-Just, le plus grand rucher collectif du monde. Il raconte l'amour grandissant entre Jeddi, grand-père, et Anir, son petit-fils de 10 ans tandis que le père, Omar, est parti en ville à Agadir pour chercher un espoir médical pour Aisha sa femme. Elle est d'après les gens du village l'étrangère possédée, car elle a volé le miel des abeilles noires pour apaiser un nouveau-né, secret qu'Anir ignore.

À l'aube, Anir sort sa mère de la maison, pendant que le village est endormi. Ensemble, ils marchent à travers les trésors du paysage : fleurs, montagnes, chênes, oliviers, le vieil arganier centenaire, dattiers, caroubiers, chèvres, aigles, serpents, abeilles.

Mais l'eau manquant, les abeilles meurent par centaines, on les ramasse à la pelle. Jeddi subit le regard attristé d'Anir car les ruches d'abeilles jaunes sont son héritage. Anir apprend par son grand-père comment s'occuper des abeilles, stériliser les ruches en ouvrant leurs couvercles en palmier pendant que les abeilles chantent autour de lui. Il est fasciné par son grand-père qui lui raconte une multitude d'histoires sur le village et les abeilles.

Est-ce que Omar retrouvera la force de vivre à Inzerki, la force de tout reconstruire malgré le soleil qui plombe? Le secret sera-t-il dévoilé à Anir?

Il faut absolument lire cet ouvrage puissant d'une beauté étonnante et d'une grande lucidité. « Souviens-toi des abeilles » un tout petit livre à lire pour un dépaysement assuré d'une réalité effarante.

MARIE-JOSÉE EST UNE RÉSIDENTE LITTÉRAIRE

From traditional stories to dogs in space!

By MAXENE RODRIGUES

DURING THE COVID LOCKDOWN, L'Abri staff initiated a French book club on the Zoom Internet platform, in hopes of easing pandemic isolation. Three or four residents who were comfortable in French took part. Vishaka Ratnayake, a coordinator at that time, would choose a story, write about ten questions about its content and forward them to the participants, who then discussed everything at a monthly meeting.

Vishaka was eventually replaced by Leah Daghaman, who recruited me to help. We shared story-finding and hosting duties. Mostly we discussed myths and legends. This continued until June of this year, when Bessborough residents Jerome and Jean-Sébastien suggested we shake things up.

Jerome wanted to do a play reading and discussion, while Jean-Sébastien offered to write an original story. Jerome chose *Tartuffe*, a classic French comedy, for our July meeting. Participants were sent a résumé and the text of one scene. At our meeting each of us read one character's lines. Before long we saw that it was impossible to appreciate a great play by reading just one scene, and we decided not to repeat our foray into play reading.

In August, we discussed Jean-Seb's story, *Les aventures du Capitaine Rex et l'équipage spatiale*. Here's how it starts:

L'histoire se déroule à l'année 3034 sur la planète Woolf. C'est une planète du système solaire Animalis et il y existe juste des chiens qui ont la capacité de parler. Il y a un centre d'exploitation spatiale et une navette pour explorer les autres systèmes solaires. À la commande de cette navette il y a le capitaine Rex qui est un Berger Allemand brun et noir, intelligent et brave. Il y a le médecin, le Dr Doggie qui est un Saint-Bernard brun et blanc qui est toujours prêt à aider un blessé sans poser de questions. Il y a également une jeune recrue, le spécialiste en ingénierie et pilote, le mécanicien Fix-It.

Everyone loved it — so Jean-Sébastien wrote a sequel for September. For the October meeting, I suggested exploring a myth, but the residents voted unanimously to read a third instalment of Jean-Sébastien's space saga.



FREPIK

MAXENE IS VICE PRESIDENT OF L'ABRI AND
A VOLUNTEER AT TWO APARTMENTS

Unseen hands

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Medal honours volunteer's passion, generosity

WHAT A SOURCE OF PRIDE for L'Abri to boast of, not one but, now two recipients of the King Charles III Coronation Medal! **Aldyth Irvine-Harrison**, a wonderful long-time volunteer at the Lafayette apartment in NDG, received the award in August in thanks for a lifetime devoted to teaching English at the secondary level. Last March, our former treasurer, **Sharyn Scott** also received this prestigious medal. In the statement accompanying the award, Aldyth was praised for "influencing generations of students through her passion and dedication. Her ability to instill a love of language and knowledge in her students has left an indelible mark on their lives." She was also recognized as a writer and poet, and for her "spirit of generosity and commitment". Nika Mestechkin, a representative of Quebec Lieutenant-Governor **Manon Jeannotte**, visited the Town of Mount Royal home of Aldyth and her husband **Robert** to present the medal. | SP



COURTESY R. HARRISON

NIKA MESTECHKIN, LEFT, PRESENTED THE MEDAL TO ALDYTH, SEEN HERE WITH HER HUSBAND ROBERT HARRISON

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