

# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 28 ■ Summer 2010 ■ \$2.00



A VERY  
SUCCESSFUL  
FIRST RUN  
■  
THE HISTORY  
OF SURGERY  
IN QUEBEC

**morrin**

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# SOCIETY PAGES

NUMBER 28 ■ SUMMER 2010

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## LIBRARY HOURS

<b>Sunday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Monday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	12:00PM-9:00PM
<b>Wednesday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Thursday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Friday</b>	12:00PM-4:00PM
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00AM-4:00PM

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UNTIL SEPTEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>.

MONDAY TO SATURDAY: 9 AM AND 1:30 PM IN FRENCH  
11 AM AND 3 PM IN ENGLISH

SUNDAY: 12 PM AND 3 PM IN FRENCH AND 1:30 PM IN ENGLISH

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The mission of the **Morrin Centre** is to share and foster English-language culture in the Quebec City region. The Morrin Centre is administered by the Literary & Historical Society of Quebec.

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

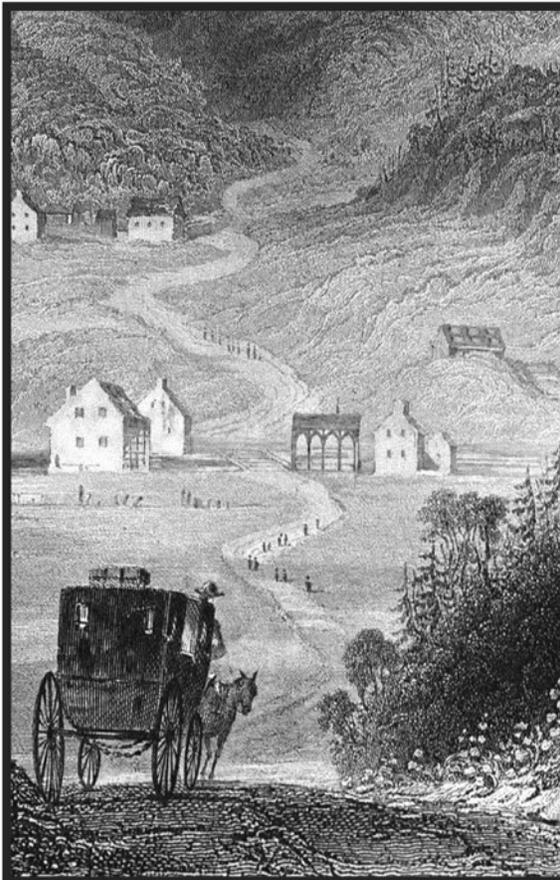
Dear Members and Friends,

On May 3, 2010, the council of the City of Quebec voted to approve a grant to the Morrin Centre in the amount of \$431,944 to complete the funding package to allow us to finish all the restoration work in the historic building that we have occupied since 1868. This is an extraordinary commitment from the City and is a very strong testimony to their confidence in the work that we are doing at the Morrin Centre.

I would like to pay particular tribute to Mayor Régis Labeaume for his encouragement and unwavering support to this incredible funding package. I would also personally like to thank Michelle Morin-Doyle, Deputy Mayor and Member of the Executive Committee, who was instrumental in getting this package through all the hurdles it had to face.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a level of support at City Hall.

I wish you all a wonderful summer.  
Best wishes,



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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Members.

It has now been a year since I left the security and relative tranquility as a musician playing with the Orchestre Symphonique de Quebec, to take up the challenges of a completely different job, that of Executive Director of the Morrin Centre. My goodness, what a change and a challenge! France Cliche, the previous director, had already left in February and Patrick Donovan, the Interim Director, was preparing to leave three weeks after my arrival. Between them they had over ten years of experience of the intimate details of the history and construction of the building. The elevator was being installed and there was still a lot of restoration work to be done. I had to quickly learn how to read architectural plans, deal with a construction site alongside the regular running of the building; that of a cultural centre, library, historic interpretation site and place where our rooms and space can be rented for different activities. Thanks to the support of a fabulous team, these tasks were made easier for me. At the end of April, Erin Zoellner, the cultural activities coordinator, left on maternity leave and I am happy to say that we have hired Valerie Chabot to replace her.

Last month we received the good news that Parks Canada has awarded us further \$84,540 to be combined with a previous contribution of \$106,000 from their Historic Sites Cost Sharing Program to be applied towards the restoration and interpretation of the jail cells. As the president, David Blair, has mentioned, the City has granted us \$431,944 in funding, which combined with the funding received from our partners, the Webster Foundation, the Jeffrey Hale foundation, the Simons Foundation along with the *Entente de partenariat régionale en tourisme de Québec*, will allow us to complete the final round of restorations to the building. The intention is that by mid-2011 the building will be completely restored, with programs in place interpreting the role of the building as a prison, the his-

tory and practice of science education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the role of the English speaking community in the history of Quebec City.

As mentioned in the last issue, we have completed a library needs assessment, (thanks to a grant from Canadian Heritage) looking into the demand for pick up and drop off locations for our books. Noting that there is an interest, we will have to now find the ways and means of providing such a service. One of the interesting results we found is that people did not realise that it is possible to look up books on line and even reserve them. Check out this service on our web page ([www.morrin.org](http://www.morrin.org)). If you do not have access to the web, you can always phone the library (418-694-9147) to get the information you need.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing away of Marianne O’Gallagher, historian, founder of Irish Heritage Quebec and past Council member of the Society. She made a great contribution to the knowledge and history of the Irish Community of Quebec and will be remembered fondly by all.

On a last note, we plan on making the fabulous radio documentary entitled “Dalhousie’s Dream”, produced by Paul Kennedy for the CBC ‘Ideas’ program, available on our website for your listening pleasure in the near future.

Best regards and have a wonderful summer,



# THE HISTORY OF SURGERY IN QUEBEC:

## A SHOREBIRD'S EYEVUEW

By Louisa Blair

When Champlain arrived in Canada in 1608, the state of surgery was at least as advanced among the First Nations as it was in France. Indeed, the Huron managed to convince at least one Jesuit priest that they were already doing complex and serial trans-species transplants.

In 1642 the Jesuit Superior reported solemnly back to France that they had met a Huron man who had lost his eye. The first replacement was with an eagle's eye — surely anyone's first choice for new eyes — but it didn't fit well, so it was replaced with a turtle's eyeball. This confused his vision, so a shorebird's eye was tried, which he found very useful for spotting fish at a distance from his canoe. But it frightened him to see so far into the deeps of the water, so this time they replaced it with a dog's eye. This finally did the trick and "served him very well until the end of his days."

Serial transplants aside, the First Nations had their own surgeons, and the new settlers frequently made use of them. They treated contused wounds and bruises with cold fomentations from running streams and springs, infected wounds with slippery elm or basswood, and ulcers with tamarack resin or juniper juice. Some First Nations used bulbed syringes made with bone and animal bladders for treating wounds and administering enemas. The newcomers made ready use of some of these remedies, such as the celebrated potion of white spruce bark, a scurvy medication that saved Jacques Cartier's crew just in the nick of time. Dislocated limbs were fixed with a combination of brute force and a rotary movement, and bonesetters skillfully reduced and set fractures with cedar or broom splints, padded with leaves and grass, and tied solidly to the broken limb with flexible birch twigs. Amputations were performed at the joints with flint or quartz knives, spouting vessels were seared, and hemorrhage arrested with redhot stones. But it was in the field of internal medicine that the First Nations were more advanced than the French. They had expectorants, emetics, purgatives, astringents, emenagogues and abortifacients. In any case there were so few French doctors that there wasn't much competition. For the first 50 years of New France's existence there were none at all, and with Molière's contemporary indictments of the medical profession, many felt that everyone was the better for it. But there were surgeons, and plenty of them.

### Surgeons & shoemakers

Surgery was considered a manual trade, as the origins of the word itself testify: a combination of cheiros, Greek for "hand," with ergon, Greek for "work." Surgery in Europe was regulated through trade guilds rather than professional associations, and in New France surgeons were also barbers until 1743, when Louis XV dissolved the barber-surgeon link. Surgery was something you learned through apprenticeship, like

a mason or a shoemaker, and not, God forbid, at a university, until the Enlightenment brought intellectuals around to thinking that perhaps practical learning was as worthwhile as the bookish kind. Surgery emerged from this era as a very respectable profession, as it was seen as the most experimental, and therefore the most progressive, of the sciences.

Many surgeons arrived in Canada as military or ship's surgeons, as it was the law that every ship should have one. Unprecedented colonial and naval expansion had created an insatiable demand for junior surgeons willing to serve abroad or aboard ship, and this experience gave them a leg up in the trade. Even fishing ships had their surgeons. Surgeon Charles Prieur, in 1716, agreed with the captain of a fishing vessel that in addition to his surgical duties he would also work at fishing to the best of his abilities, for which he received 25 livres a month.

Some of the early surgeons of Quebec are surprising. There was a monk called Jean l'Ancien (d. 1744), who was completely untrained but such a competent surgeon that he was consulted by the most renowned surgeons of his day. Similarly unschooled was Sister Angélique Viger de Saint-Martin (d. 1832), who was an excellent surgeon, and would undertake operations that other surgeons had botched. Then there was Robert Nelson, the first to perform a laparotomy, and the first to attribute peritonitis to the appendix. He also happened to be a revolutionary, and in 1838 organized an invasion, proclaimed independence for what was to become Quebec, and declared himself President of the Republic.

Many barber-surgeons clearly practised with little regard for their souls. An episcopal edict passed in Quebec telling priests which sins could be forgiven and which could not advised that "surgeons and barbers who cut hair and shave on Sundays and holy days should not be absolved unless they promise to do so no longer without permission, and never during Divine Service."

### The swiftest hand, the sharpest knife

Few of the first Canadian surgeons were university-educated. Most of them had learned their trade in a very different school: the battlefield. The only novelties in the practice of surgery were the ideas of the French surgeon Ambroise Paré, who introduced salves instead of boiling oil for cauterizing open wounds, and ligatures for tying veins after amputations. Many military surgeons took up residence in Canada. There were still plenty of occasions in that first century of Canadian settlement to make use of their wartime experience dealing with gunshot and cannonball wounds.

On the battlefield one learned speed, if nothing else. Dominique-Jean Larrey, Napoleon's surgeon, who participat-

# TRANSACTIONS

ed in 60 big battles, once performed 200 amputations in a single day. However, no-one knew anything about infection yet, and many of the newly-amputated died of infections. Nor did they know about sanitation: armies traditionally lost more soldiers to typhus and dysentery than they did on the battlefield.

With no pain killers yet, the best surgeon was the one with the swiftest hand, the sharpest knife and the coolest nerve. One minute was considered ample time for an amputation, and the surgeon's skill was judged largely by his speed and the amount of blood on his frock-coat. Bedside manner was not yet on the list of desirable attainments for a surgeon. The notorious Dupuytren of Paris saw 10,000 patients a year, (an early reason for preferring a capitation system, as in the UK, to fee-for-service, as we have in Canada) but apparently had no friends at all, and was known as "the best of surgeons and the worst of men."

In the 1830s a man arrived at the Marine and Emigrant Hospital in Quebec with such bad frostbite that both his legs had to be removed just above the knee. "It was decided to have the double event come off at the same time — two legs — two operators — with the object of saving the patient as much as possible," recalled a surgical student at the time. "From the instant the knife entered, until the leg was on the floor, was *one minute and forty-two seconds*... The vessels were tied and the wound dressed inside of three minutes." The surgeon was none other than Dr. James Douglas, founder of the Beauport Insane Asylum along with Dr. Joseph Morrin, and a fellow luminary of the Literary and Historical Society.

Patients had several unfortunate handicaps to recovery: before they were operated on they were likely to have fasted and been bled and purged into a state of exhaustion. If they were in a hospital, their chances of surviving were worse than at home, where infections were less likely to be rampant. The surgeon might wash his hands after the operation but, until the late 1800s, not likely before. (The Hotel-Dieu hospital in Quebec provided a sink in its first operating room, in 1895, for the surgeons to wash up *after* the operation...) Until the nineteenth century the original dressing would have been left on.

However, surgeons also knew their limits. Very few operations were made on the thorax or abdomen, as everyone knew the patient would die. Caesarians were only performed on dead women, and were recommended by the church so that the baby could be extracted and baptised. Only two caesarians on living women are known to have been performed in Canada before 1800, and they were both to save the child rather than the mother.

## The first mastectomy

The first recorded breast cancer operation in Canada was performed at Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Quebec by Michel Sarrazin, the greatest doctor of New France, and namesake of today's hospice on Chemin Saint-Louis.

His patient was Marie Barbier de l'Assomption, the daughter of a carpenter and one of the first colonists to become a nun. She founded a school at Sainte-Famille on the Ile d'Orléans in 1685, and in 1693 became Mother Superior. She was treated by Sarrazin at Hôtel-Dieu for four months, but his ministrations had not worked, and were doubtless not helped by her wearing of hair shirts, spiked corsets and other athletic outfits of self-mortification. Sarrazin was very loathe to attempt an operation as, although she was dying before their very eyes, "to attempt the operation is almost certainly to deal her a mortal blow — having almost no hope that she would survive it, let alone be healed."

Sarrazin had studied in Paris under Dionis, the first surgeon ever to have been made a professor at the prestigious Royal Botanical Gardens medical school. Dionis had described breast cancer minutely, as well as how to perform mastectomies, so we have a fair idea of how Sarrazin went about it.

Before the operation the sisters accompanied Sister Marie in a novena, and the morning of the operation she went to Mass at 4.30 and made a general confession. She and Sarrazin both took communion, "to reinforce what little chance of success he had with such an exceptional and dangerous operation." Sister Marie prayed without ceasing throughout the operation, which she offered up in expiation of her sins. The only pain killer she might have had was cognac.

Sarrazin would have been dressed in ordinary clothes, with his sleeves rolled up, and probably would not have washed his hands first. He marked the area with ink, then passed a curved needle through the tumour, using a cord to pull the tumour away from the chest. He then used a large knife to cut off the breast, and stopped the initial bleeding with his hand. Then he treated the wound with an astringent powder mixed with eggwhite. Her whole torso was then bound up with a towel.

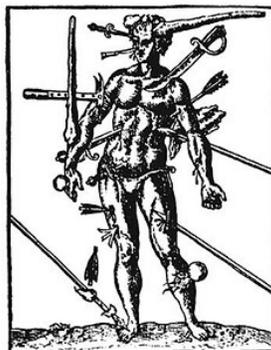
Some idea of the pain was described by novelist Fanny Burney in 1810 when Dominique-Jean Larrey (of 200 amputations per day fame) performed the same operation on her. "When the dreadful steel was plunged into the breast — cutting through veins — arteries — flesh — nerves — I needed no injunctions not to restrain my cries. I began a scream that lasted unintermittingly during the whole time of the incision — & I almost marvel that it rings not in my Ears still! so excruciating was the agony. When the wound was made, & the instrument was withdrawn, the pain seemed undiminished,

## THE Method of Curing Wounds made by Gun-shot.

Also by Arrows and Darts, with their Accidents.

Written by AMBROS PARIÉ of Lausl, *Consultor and chief Chirurgion to the French King.*

Faithfully done into English out of the French Copie, by  
*Walter Hamond Chirurgien.*



London printed by Isaac Iaggard, and are to be sold in Barbican. 1687.

# TRANSACTIONS

for the air that suddenly rushed into those delicate parts felt like a mass of minute but sharp & forked poniards, that were tearing the edge of the wound..."

The sisters would have been instructed to care for Sister Marie by applying salves, and watching her closely. She was advised to eat simply, breathe lightly, wear loose clothes, be peaceful and joyful, and try not to get angry or sad — post-operative advice that is relevant to this day.

Sister Marie Barbier de l'Assomption healed well and lived for another 19 years.

## Breathing a vein

Normal procedures for surgeons would have been less traumatic. Managing whitlows, trussing ruptures, treating leg ulcers, patching up fistulas and medicating venereal infections would have been the order of the day.

In spite of Harvey's discovery, published in 1628, that blood circulated rather than ebbed and flowed like the tides, the humoral theory of disease persisted, and it was another couple of centuries before the idea that illness was the cause of symptoms, not their result, began to filter through to common practice.

The surgeons and their patients were very reluctant, for example, to give up their favourite cure-all — venesection, better known as bloodletting.

Bloodletting involved tying a bandage around the arm to make the veins in the forearm stand out, and then opening it up. This was known as "breathing a vein," and patients often demanded this of surgeons, whether they recommended it or not — yesterday's version of antibiotic treatment.

Leeches were also fashionable: in 1833 Canada was importing 40 million of them from France for the purpose, and Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Quebec was still buying them in 1864.

Edward Dagge Worthington, a medical student in Quebec in the 1830s, recalled that it was considered to be the correct thing to be bled at least every spring. "No-one considered it necessary to consult as to the propriety of a bleeding ... A man walked in as a man would now walk into a barber shop to be shaved, saying as he did so: 'I want to be bled, please.' Bandages and basins were always at hand; and when a good quart crockery bowl was nearly full, if the operator showed signs of stopping the flow, very commonly the man would say 'Oh don't be afraid; let it run, sir. I haven't been bled for a good while.' Women, he recalled, liked to be bled in the foot to avoid unsightly scarring, and in his office the more religious would ask for the three-foot high crucifix that stood in a convenient corner, so they could hold on to it with their free hand while they were shedding blood.

## Mesmeric blandishments

Hospitals provided lots of practice for apprentice surgeons such as Worthington. Every surgeon had three or four apprentices, and taught anatomy in his own private dissecting room. Many of Quebec's early surgeons had studied in Scotland, where all the great strides forward in medicine were being made, and were outstanding practitioners. Long before it had a medical school, Quebec was an excellent place to learn surgery. When Dr. Joseph Morrin opened the first medical school on May 15th 1848, he declared to its students that they were getting best education available in North America. Their teachers were excellent, the busy shipyards provided plenty of accident victims, and the port was visited by 1200 boats every year. Medical education in Quebec, he added, had another unique advantage: it was bilingual.

Anesthetics burst on to the scene in about 1842, but not before Canada had had a brief but feverish flirtation with mesmerism. This was sparked off by the arrival of one Edmund Gibbon Wakefield who, according to Worthington, "had used his mesmeric blandishments upon the tender affections of a youthful boarding-school heiress in England as to make a residence in Canada rather desirable." Worthington was present at a successful operation performed under mesmerism, but "in a short time the profession got tired of it, and no further experiments were made."

Worthington himself was the first in Canada to perform a major operation using anaesthetic in 1847, when he amputated a leg below the knee using sulphuric ether. The patient, he recounts, "during the whole time of the operation, retained his consciousness, talked rationally, and made some witty replies to questions put to him, converting the scene from one of a painful

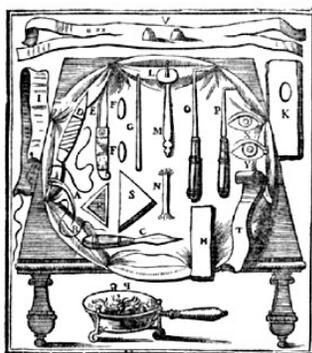
to a most ludicrous character." With the discovery of painkillers and then antiseptics, surgery lengthened its reach, and now, with advances in biotechnology and genetic manipulation, people are getting kitted out with the parts of animals, just as the Huron were doing in 1642. ■

Legends for pictures:

1. Paré, Ambroise. *The method of curing wounds made by gunshot. Also by arrows and darts, with their accidents.* London: Isaac Jaggard, 1617. The French surgeon Ambroise Paré was famous for surgeries performed on the battlefield. He introduced ligatures for tying veins after amputation.

2. Tools used for eye operations by Pierre Dionis, Paris,

SIXIÈME DÉMONSTRATION. 559  
FIG. XXXVI. POUR LES ANGLES DES YEUX.



DES trois opérations que le Chirurgien fait aux angles des yeux, la première est l'encanthis, de *ci*, qui veut dire dedans, & de *adent*, qui signifie angle de l'œil, pour exprimer par ce mot que cette maladie est une excroissance de chair qui vient au grand angle des yeux. Il y en a de deux espèces; l'une, indolente, rougeâtre, tendre & flasque, qui obéit facilement aux remèdes ordi-

Des opérations qui se font aux angles des yeux.

## FROM THE VAULT

### THE EARLY PRESBYTERIANISM OF QUEBEC UNDER DR. SPARK

READ BEFORE THE LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUEBEC, THE 26<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH, 1907

By Rev. Wylie C. Clarke, B.A, B.D.

Published in Transactions New Series Vol. XXI-XXIX, Sessions of 1906-07, No. 27, page 28

"When the city was captured by General Wolfe, the population of the province was about 70,000, nearly all of whom were Roman Catholic. In 110 rural parishes there were only 19 Protestants. General Murray reported the Roman Catholics to be frugal, industrious, moral and religious, but very ignorant. Of the Protestants he said: "I report them to be in general the most immoral collection of men I ever knew, of course, little calculated to make new subjects enamoured with our laws, religion and customs, and far less adapted to enforce those laws which are to govern them. "It may truly be said of these men, that they were rather infidels than Protestants, because their religion did nothing to elevate their characters or to lender useful their lives.

With the fall of the city, came a new era, as a new element was at once introduced into the life of the province. The Scotch and British regiments brought men not only of different speech, but also of different religions, and having with them their chaplains. Protestant services were held within the city immediately after the conquest.

The first service of the Presbyterian church was conducted by the Rev. Mr. McPherson of the Fraser Highlanders, in his official capacity as Chaplain of the regiment. Soon after the conquest a congregation was organized in the city, and was granted the privilege of worshipping in an apartment of the Jesuit's College. The Rev. George Henry became the first- pastor of the congregation in 1765, and thus was the first settled minister of the Presbyterian faith in the province. Mr. Henry was an able minister of the gospel, and in a godly life of benevolence and goodness aided much to call the Protestant elements of the city to a higher standard of living.

The real founder, however, of Presbyterianism in Quebec was the Rev. Alexander Spark, D.D. In a

growing city, or in a new country, blessed is the church who has a leader with all the qualities of noble leadership. In the declining years of the Rev. Mr. Henry Alexander Spark was a tutor to the children of Sir John Caldwell at Belmont. In him some of the members of the congregation saw one who would, if the promises of his youth were fulfilled, ably fill their pulpit and represent their denomination in the city. So he went back to Scotland, was ordained and returned and took up the work in 1785.



Upon the new Minister fell the duty of attending to the needs of his own people amidst the trials, temptations and discouragements of a new land ; but this was only a small part of what he gave to the community. Like all Scotchmen of his day he was conscious of the power of education and identified himself with every movement to obtain for the children a better system of schools. He willingly gave of his time to render assistance to any ambitious youth striving towards a college course, and never missed an opportunity to impress upon the public in general the

necessity of giving marked attention to the improvement of the means to provide schools for all.

As a member of society, Dr. Spark took an active part in the public life of the city and whether upon the platform or in the social function he was called on to represent his denomination he could be trusted to do it in such a way as not to give offence to the most critical.

In his sermons (many in manuscript form are in the possession of relatives) he showed himself a fine classical scholar, a good exegete and a fair logician. He was somewhat metaphysical at times, yet frequently became very practical, demanding the results of Christian belief in honesty, truthfulness and charity. His diary shows he had a love for science and twice each day he recorded the readings of the thermometer and barometer, this being even done on the day of his death.

## FROM THE VAULT

In our day of tolerance and good feeling we can scarcely realize how far we have travelled since those days of beginnings, when the argument was keen and the fight bitter in all religious questions. The strong ever sought to dominate the weak, and the weak to plot against the strong. It was not uncommon for even "members of the cloth" to finish a wordy dispute with the fists. Through all this Dr. Spark carried himself with the dignity of the Christian gentleman not as a weakling but as a strong, fair fighter for what he honestly held to be the rights of his denomination.

One of the things essential to the prosperity of a denomination in any place is to have a house of worship of its own-Realizing this, Dr. Spark endeavoured to secure a lot of land upon which to erect a church. In 1802 a petition bearing 148 signatures was addressed to King George III. In the same year letters patent were issued, granting a lot of ground on Anne street, for the erection of a place of worship. Eight years later, on November 3rd, the new building was opened and dedicated under the name of St. Andrew's Church, the congregation before this having been known as the Scotch Church. After the opening of the new church the congregation increased rapidly and became one of the strong influences for better morality in the city.



THE REVEREND ALEXANDER SPARK, D.D.  
The Minister of St. Andrew's Church.

During these years there had been settlements of Highlanders made along the St. Lawrence. These were ever in the heart of Dr. Spark. He knew how they longed for the word of life and how bravely they struggled to keep the fires on the family altar glowing ; but he also knew that unless some one could be found to minister to them, the time would come when they would fall from the faith of their fathers. The religious struggles among these settlements were pathetic and heart breaking. Here was the new-born infant and no man of God to give it the sacrament of Baptism. There lay the young maiden in the cold arms of death and no comforting voice to bring the consolation of Heaven and commit the body to the grave with sacred rites. Fathers gave their daughters to the men who had won their love, without the performing of the marriage ceremony, exacting the promise, that they would be wedded the first time a minister should come to the settlement. From time to time Dr. Spark applied to the old land for men to man these places ; but all to no purpose. At different periods he himself went down the River, baptized the children and married couples who

had been living together for years. But gradually, what he had foreseen happened. The Priest was human and offered consolation to the afflicted, and in zeal for his church, coupled with the pity of his heart for the people who were destitute of religious service, he did his best. At first they kept him at arm's length, viewing him with suspicion; but at last, almost reluctantly, they accepted his services until their descendants spoke the French language and worshipped according to the Roman Catholic faith. From the fate of these settlements and the warnings of Dr. Spark and others, the Presbyterian Church learned a never-to-be-forgotten lesson, and is striving to-day, with all its energies to follow her sons and daughters into every corner of the great settling West.

At the early age of 57, Dr. Spark was called from the scene of his strenuous labours to his eternal reward. He preached in the morning, and having attended a funeral service, he was ascending the hill to the afternoon meeting in the church. Before he reached the top he was stricken, and thus was spared the frailties of age or the languishing of long illness.

A loving people have placed a tablet in St. Andrew's Church, which gives in brief outline the history of his life. A grateful church looks back to him as one of its great pioneers and returns thanks to God for the mighty men who stood in the hard places and failed not.” ■

### NOTE BY THE EDITOR

In light of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Andrew's Church, being celebrated this June, we thought you may enjoy reading this transcript of a talk given before the LHSQ in 1907.

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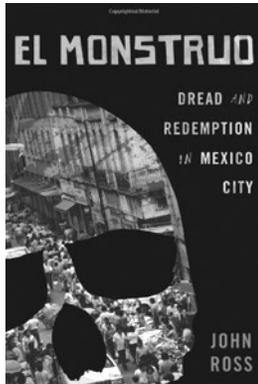
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# LIBRARY PAGES

## BOOK REVIEW

By Simon Auclair



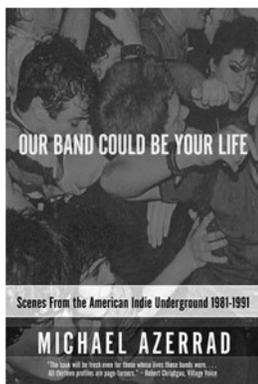
**El Monstruo: Dread and Redemption in Mexico City**  
By John Ross

From its legendary foundation by the Aztecs in 1325, on the western side of Lake Texcoco just where the god indicated their new home should be (an eagle perched on a nopal cactus with a snake in its beak was the sign, now the flag of Mexico), to its development into one of the largest agglomerations

in the world, John Ross takes us on an historic journey through Mexico City.

The beatnik author has been living in the old colonial quarter of the city for the last three decades and has listened to the stories of its inhabitants. He retells us their memories of empires and wars, in his "on the road" direct style, always letting their voices be heard, being his most comfortable self amongst the people. He shows us how many times this city has been destroyed and rebuilt, conquered and abandoned by the elites, and reminds us that the people have always been faithful to her.

The book is a great overview of the history of the city that , still to this day, dominates politically and culturally, the life of the Mexican people. Their history happened in the very streets of this monster and it is still happening there today.



**Our Band Could Be Your Life**  
By Michael Azerrad

Here is a book for the desperate. They had no money, no connections to the milieu, no major labels would even hear the demo tapes they were making, but the bands showcased in this book made a definitive impact on American music in pure do-it-yourself fashion.

Azerrad tells us the story of 13 major Indie bands, (amongst them the legendary Sonic Youth, Black Flag, Dinosaur Jr., Hüsker Dü, Fugazi and others) and their struggle to make the music they loved. We're talking about playing with low-quality material, recording in basements, pressing ridiculously low amount of extended plays, giving interviews to unknown fanzines, sleeping on floors, touring in vans that irremediably break down, playing in front of two people, getting spit on, mugged and robbed.

Of course, there were riots, drugs and sometimes even, girls. But these angry suburban kids were in it for more than rock and roll fame, they were in it for change.

With the Reagan years dragging on, a country becoming more and more conservative, and the unemployment rate raising through the roof. American society was becoming a bottled up post-boomer wasteland. So these suburban kids did what the hippies did before them, they hit the road and played music. The sound was often new, raw, inspired by punk bands, but faster and even more to the point. Thus was the birth of "hardcore punk". The book observes its evolution, from 1981 to 1991, into a slowed down tempo, called sludge, eventually inspiring Seattle's grunge, a New York dissonant wall of sound called no-wave (against new-wave's pop driven songs), a rhythmic, beat driven industrial punk, eventually spawning industrial music. Music was changed. ■

**A critic overview from Wikipedia:**

"In 2006 *The Guardian* rated *Our Band Could Be Your Life* as one of the 50 best music books ever written. In 2009, *Paste* magazine named the book one of the 12 best music books of the decade; the *Los Angeles Times* listed it as one of "46 Essential Rock Reads." In a review of the book in the *Village Voice*, critic Robert Christgau wrote, "... Let me give Michael Azerrad's *Our Band Could Be Your Life* its well-earned thumbs-up. Here's my rave: While reading this 500 -page history of '80s Indie-rock, I only resorted to something lighter to avoid putting my back out. All 13 profiles are page-turners."



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# LIBRARY PAGES

## WISHLIST

Our dear ancestors and past members here at the LHSQ had a oh so polite but rather vague way of asking for books from their members. Please note, in the following list, the place of French literature which is not being bought anymore:

*“Members will please note that these few stray suggestions are made simply for the convenience of those who may like to have some sort of list before them when thinking out suggestions of their own. As already stated in Section V, the four kinds of books about which the Committee venture to offer these desultory hints are:*

*Poetry of all kinds.*

*Books commonly stigmatized as “deep”, or falsely called “dry”.*

*Books published few years ago; but quite good enough independent of mere “up-to-dateness”.*

*Everything in foreign languages.*

*(...)*

*N.B. It is needless to point out that the following classification is of the most casual kind.*

*English poetry.*

*Other english literature.*

*French literature.*

*Other literatures.*

*Folklore.*

*Travels.*

*History.*

*Politics, Public life, Sociology, Economics.*

*Naval and Military*

*Religion*

*Natural History, Anthropology and Psychology*

*Other Science*

*Philosophy*

*Art, Music*

*Miscellaneous”<sup>1</sup>*

As for now, let us be more precise. We are looking for russian literature:

*Resurrection, Leo Tolstoy*

*A Country Doctor’s Notebook, Mikhail Bulgakov*

*Black Snow, Mikhail Bulgakov*

*The Fatal Egg, Alan Ginsburg*

*Moscow to the End of the Line, Venedikt Erofeev*

*The White Guard, Mikhail Bulgakov*

*Master and Man, Leo Tolstoy*

*Lenin’s Embalmers, I.B. Zbarskii*

*Happy Moscow, Andrei Platonov*

*Death and the Penguin, Andrei Kurkov*

*The Kreutzer Sonata, Leo Tolstoy*

*The Exchange, Iurii Trifonov*

*Heart of a Dog, Mikhail Bulgakov*

*Flight, Mikhail Bulgakov*

1875 Bulletin no. 2 of the LHSQ, Victoria Day 1904, p.32, in Transactions of the LHSQ 24-26.

## LATE BOOKS NOW AND THEN

The library has been experiencing problems with books being returned on time. Since we do not charge late fees, it is challenging to convince members to return books in a timely fashion. However, let us take solace in the fact that this is not a new trend.

*Report of the Librarian, December 31, 1875. “The chronic complaint of this, in common no doubt with all libraries, is that books are taken out and tardily returned, if returned at all. It is to be hoped, especially with regards to new books, that subscribers will pay more attention to the rule allowing fifteen days only for the detention of a volume. Books are sometimes lost completely...”<sup>1</sup>*

As you can see, times have changed — a bit. We now allow 21 days “for the detention of a volume”.

Books belonging to a lending library are meant to be circulated, not “detained” indefinitely.

Our book limits are more than generous. Please respect others’ rights to read your favourites by bringing them back on time.

1. LHSQ Transactions, vol. XI-XV, sessions 1876-7, p.190.



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## MEMBERSHIP

# INFINITE RICHES IN A LITTLE ROOM

By Marie Rubsteck, Development Director

This is the title of Bulletin No. 2 of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, Victoria Day, 1904. The bulletin has a note at the bottom of the Page 1.

*“N.B. – Will all Members kindly keep one Copy and give the other to some Friend of intellectual tastes who is not already a Member.”*

While we will not be sending you a second copy of the Society Pages, you may want to consider lending your copy to a friend, neighbour or colleague who may be interested. We will gladly send him/her information on how to become a member.

The 1904 bulletin goes on:

*“Section I – Advantages of Membership*

*New members may join at any time, on being proposed and seconded, and elected by ballot at any monthly meeting.*

*The subscription is \$4.00 a year, payable in advance on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.*

*Members joining during the second, third and fourth quarters of the year will only pay \$3.00, \$4.00 and \$1.00 respectively, for a period between their joining and the 31<sup>st</sup> of December the same year.*

*The subscription will cover all members of the same family living under the same roof.”*

While prices, rules and procedures have somewhat changed since 1904, the following is still very pertinent:

*“Our advantages are many; our needs but one – and that is New Members. And so we ask our non-subscribing friends to join us in changing a state of things which is rather a reproach to Quebec than a defect in our Society itself. We are sure that these friends must be quite as jealous of the reputation of the place they live in as we can be ourselves. And we are equally sure that none of them would like to hear how often intelligent visitors to our Library have expressed a polite surprise that even our former intellectual attractions could only draw so very few subscribers together, from the whole educated public of this world-renowned City of Quebec.”*

While membership has somewhat increased over the last few years to about 400 members, we are still far from our objective. So, let's go out there and tell our “non-subscribing friends” and the “educated public of this world-renowned City of Quebec” that there is a magnificent Victorian library in the Old City that was listed as being amongst the most beautiful libraries in the world. ■

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



### QUEBEC CITY CELTIC FESTIVAL 2010

The Quebec City Celtic Festival is back for a fifth edition set to take place from September 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010. In the past the Morrin Centre has been the sole producer of the festival. This year we are

pleased to announce that the festival Celtique de Québec is acting as a non-profit organisation working in very close partnership with the Morrin Centre. The festival committee, under the leadership of Patrick Bourrassa, is busy planning for another successful year. The committee has decided to spread the events out over a week and hold them in various locations. The festival will conclude with a concert by MEAV, one of Ireland's most talented female singers, to be held on September 17<sup>th</sup> at Palais Montcalm.

If you wish to be involved in the Celtic Festival, please let us know.

For more information, please visit the festival website at [www.festivalceltique.morrin.org](http://www.festivalceltique.morrin.org), or look us up on Facebook (Festival Celtique de Québec). ■



## EVENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES



## 2010 IMAGINATION: WRITERS' FESTIVAL

By Delia Fagundes

What happens when you put some of the most creative minds in Canadian literature together for one week in one of the most beautiful cities in Canada? What about when you add in a few artists, dancers, actors and singers? You get *ImagiNation 2010: Writers' Festival*, a new addition to the circuit of Canadian literary festivals, which happened right here at the Morrin Centre this past April. This year's festival saw eleven authors come together for five days of events focused on everything from graphic novels to Gaelic culture! The event was sponsored by Canada Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, the Jeffrey Hale Foundation and the Maxwell Cummings Foundation.

The festival started on Wednesday, April 11 with a performance by African dance ensemble, Ataensha, who performed a few traditional rituals destined to bring good fortune to the festival and to the Morrin Centre. Lawrence Hill and Karolyn Smardz-Frost, two good friends in a tightly-knit community of Canadian Black History buffs, then entertained the audience with readings from their most successful novels. Afterward, the authors took questions from the audience, talking candidly about their research, their motivations and their own personal histories.

On Thursday night, Neil Bissoondath joined us to talk about the creative writing process outside the confines of the classroom! Régis Labeaume, mayor of Québec, and Michelle Morin-Doyle, deputy mayor, took some time out of their busy schedules to be with us for the event.

Friday afternoon was dedicated to an in-depth discussion about our memories with Jeffrey Moore and Camilla Gibb, accompanied by capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art, by Capoeira Sul da Bahia. On Friday night, there was not a spare chair left in the place as people lined up to see one of Canada's greatest literary figures, Alistair MacLeod. He was joined by Gaelic singer and steppedancer Tess Leblanc accompanied by Louis-Simon Lemieux on the fiddle. A variety of Scotch whiskeys were showcased by Québec City's own whiskey expert, Patrick Bourassa—much to the delight of guests and Mr. MacLeod himself.

Saturday was jam-packed with excitement for book enthusiasts of all ages. In the morning, Mireille Levert, a well-known children's author and illustrator, showed a group of toddlers how her characters come to life with a presentation on watercolours, followed by a reading from her latest book. The children then created their own masterpieces! In the afternoon, Les Gros Becs Theatre gave us a presentation on marionettes in the library. Children and adults alike enjoyed seeing a shoebox theatre expand before their eyes into a full-functioning stage, complete with a full cast of characters! At the same time, in College Hall, guests were treated to a multi-lingual presentation by some of Mexico's most well-respected authors, presented by the Salon Internationale du Livre de Québec. Restaurant Le Sol Latino was also on hand to serve up some delicious, homemade guacamole, salsa and chips. Musical group Mosaïques entertained guests in the afternoon with their peppy brand of Latino music. Saturday evening was dedicated to celebrating the contributions of women to the arts, with Camilla Gibb, Heather O'Neill and Karen Connelly. *Cosmopolitans* (front cover picture), a performance by the women of Capoeira Sul da Bahia, and a second performance by Mosaïques ensured that guests were well entertained.

On Sunday, Guy Delisle, presented in collaboration with the Festival de la bande dessinée francophone de Québec, entertained graphic novel enthusiasts with stories from his adventures that took him from Israel to North Korea! In the evening, George Elliot Clarke brought his poetry to life with a passionate reading of some of his most provocative poems. Dan Parker, a local slam poetry artist, who set some of Clarke's poetry to music for the evening, won the rights to use Clarke's poetry in future performances!

After a very successful first run, we are now already busy planning for next year's festival. If you have any suggestions for themes, performers or authors, please feel free to pass them along to us. ■

# EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

## UPCOMING EVENTS by Valérie Chabot

### GUIDED TOURS

**This summer, our daily tours are back.** The highlights of the tour are Quebec City's first prison and its original cell block, former Morrin College and the splendid Victorian library. Our motivated guides are eager to share their knowledge with you. Next time you are visiting Old Quebec, drop by for a visit of one Quebec City's best kept secrets.

#### Schedule:

#### Monday to Saturday

**9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in French**

**11 a.m. and 3 p.m. in English**

#### Sunday

**12 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. in French**

**1:30 p.m. in English**

Tours last from 45min. to 1 hour. Prices: \$6 per adult and \$4 for children aged 10 and under.

From May 31st to September 5<sup>th</sup> No reservation required.

### THE METIS LIGHTHOUSE

On **Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup>**, we are welcoming historian and Director of Les Jardins de Metis (Reford Gardens) Alexander Reford. Even though you would expect him to discuss gardening, he will actually be talking about the Metis Lighthouse. The timing of this conference is perfect because the new Federal Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act came into effect on May 29, designating the Metis Lighthouse as a heritage lighthouse.

Join historian and director of Jardins de Métis (Reford Gardens) Alexander Reford, to demystify this maritime emblem. Mr Reford has been compiling information about the region and its inhabitants for over 10 years. Together with Paul Gendron, grandson of lighthouse keeper, Octave Gendron, he wrote *The Metis Lighthouse*, an illustrated book with more than 40 photographs, drawings and paintings found in public and private collections across Canada. In addition to writing this book, both Gendron and Reford ardently worked with the *Metis-sur-mer* community to obtain heritage recognition from Parks Canada. Now, the next big step is finding a person or organization to acquire the lighthouse and maintain its heritage character.

The Metis lighthouse figures prominently in local iconography, appearing in calendars, on placemats, licence plates, and in the name of the regional school board -- the Commission scolaire des Phares. The first lighthouse on the site was constructed in 1874 and the present one was built over 100 years ago, opening on April 1, 1909. The Metis Lighthouse has attracted generations of artists, photographers and scientists, but unlike other lighthouses in the region, which have been transformed into museums, tourism kiosks, or interpretation centres, the Metis Lighthouse remains enigmatic, easy to see but difficult to get to.

The conference starts at 7 p.m., on **Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup>**. Admission: \$10 for non-members and \$8 for members. Do not forget to reserve your tickets for this special talk!

### BOOK QUEST 2010

If you know kids between the ages of 6 to 12 who want to practice English as a second language, or kids who are already fluent in English, then this is a great activity for them. This year, *Fantastic Creatures* will carry young readers away to adventures that are out of this world. Book Quest kicks off on **Saturday, June 26, at 10:00 a.m.** with a launch party where participants will receive basic information and all the materials necessary to complete the Book Quest. Children and parents will also be treated to a show by magic experts MysterAct!

Children will be divided into two groups depending on their age (5-8 or 9-12 years old). Each child is encouraged to read **four** books this summer. They will be able to choose from a vast selection of books depending on their reading level. Kids can choose their first book at the launch party, and then they can come back to the library whenever they are ready to answer questions about that book. Then they can move on to the next one! Children will be given a passport, which will be stamped at the library each time they finish a book! Children will also receive a small prize for each book they have read.

Once the child has finished reading four books, and has correctly answered the corresponding questions, their name will be entered into a draw to win one of our fabulous prizes! The draw will take place at our Book Quest Wrap-up Party on August 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. This is the perfect occasion to celebrate the childrens' hard work and have some fun! This will be the sixth edition of the Book Quest, and we already have quite a few schools on board! We have received a positive response from teachers, who have praised our efforts to keep kids reading throughout the summer. We hope that the kids will share the same enthusiasm as their teachers.

This year's Book Quest is sponsored by:

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**Visit our website for more details about future events**

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