

Society PAGES

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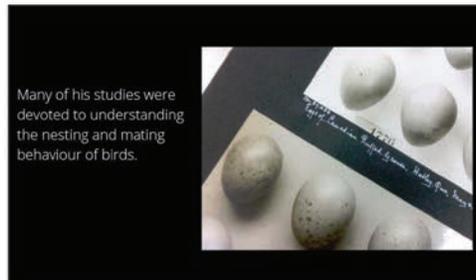
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English-language culture in the Quebec City region.



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Monday	closed
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Wednesday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
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Friday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

*Please see page 25 for our holiday hours.

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FRONT COVER

The Cosmo in the Library, decorated for the holidays, 2021.

Photo by Marguerite Paradis

Letter from the President

Gina Farnell



Lots to be thankful for, lots to look forward to.

The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec is most thankful for the support of its members, friends, and the community that surrounds us. We will have come through the pandemic months relatively unscathed. This we owe to our members, who stood by us through thick and thin and who gladly took part in events and activities, even though they were offered differently. We also truly appreciate the financial support received from both private and public sectors during these difficult times.

Slowly but surely, activities and events are livening up the Morrin Centre again. Some of these activities are now held in person, always respecting public health protocols, and others are a hybrid of in-person and online access. The Library now welcomes more members, and we have seen a gradual return of visitors to the Centre as well as an increase in interest in renting our beautiful spaces for receptions and social gatherings.

Sadly, our well-known Literary Feast will not be held this year. We are more determined than ever to hold an exceptional edition of this sought-after event in the coming year.

'Tis the time of the year to look back at what has been accomplished and to look forward to what is to come. To all of you, LHSQ members, community members, volunteers, and of course staff, a very merry holiday season. May you enjoy fun-filled times with family and friends. May you also find the time to recharge and rest with a good book and a hot drink.

Cheers,
Gina Farnell



From the Executive Director

Barry McCullough

As we gradually shift back to in-person programming, a number of our activities are still taking place in the virtual space. For instance, two new virtual activities will be happening this winter. The first, *In These Spaces*, is a series of discussions focusing on our building's historic rooms. For each segment, an expert in a domain related to one of the rooms will present on a subject related to that space. At the end of each discussion, we will give the story behind an artifact held in that space. The virtual series is slated to begin in January 2022.

The second is *Library Lectures*, a new series of history talks. It kicks off on December 14 with an online presentation titled "The Criminal Past of the Faubourg Saint-Jean, 1760–1914" by Donald Fyson, full professor of history at Université Laval and member of the LHSQ Council. I'm very much looking forward to it!

We are deep into our planning for Imagination 2022, which is set to take place from April 1 to 6. The current plan is to host the festival in person, following the mandated health and safety protocols. We have been exploring the possibility of including a hybrid component and would love to get your opinion.

I would like to wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday season with those close to you. It is a time for us to reflect and appreciate the good things in life, something that is especially important following a year of ups and downs.

See you in 2022,
Barry McCullough

Mail Saint-Roch: Quebec City's Urban Experiment

By Hoffman Wolff

The rapid suburbanization of North America in the 1960s and 1970s dealt a near-fatal blow for downtowns throughout the continent. Newly constructed malls, the gathering places in many suburbs, offered residents and vendors what downtowns could not: easy accessibility; free parking; a safe, climate-controlled environment; and the ability to pick and choose tenants to fit a desired clientele.

To help rejuvenate their now-struggling cores, many cities tried to compete by bringing some of the advantages of the malls into downtowns: pedestrianizing streets, bulldozing blocks of aging buildings and replacing them with parking garages or smaller indoor malls, or bringing highways closer into city centres.

Looking back, many of these plans seem feeble, poorly thought out, and doomed to fail. Some of the “malls” are laughably meager in comparison with their suburban brethren, while windswept, needlessly expansive parking lots and ominously looming elevated highways make the pedestrian experience unpleasant. In looking at pre-redevelopment images, the loss of handsome, historic city

blocks in favor of these projects, many of which were designed with stark Brutalist architecture, can be infuriating.

These observations, however, are made with several decades' worth of hindsight and knowledge of best practices. To get a fuller picture of cities' rationales for their decisions, it is worth taking a closer look at their situations at the time the decisions were made.



Mail Saint-Roch in 1975

Le Mail Saint-Roch, 1975-10-18. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N013634. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

Reversing the "Irreversible"

Quebec City was no stranger to the city planning trends of the era, engaging in several redevelopment schemes during the 1960s and 1970s with varying levels of success. The Mail Saint-Roch (later the

Mail Centre-Ville), which existed from 1974 to 2006, comes across as a quirky, ill-fated artifact of the era. Yet, its conception, life, and death are worth examining, as they offer a glimpse into the larger decline and rebirth of the neighborhood, and present a fascinating initiative by a group of merchants whose city government had assumed that their eventual failure was inevitable.

By the 1960s, the population of Saint-Roch

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had declined from its peak of 30,000 to fewer than 15,000, as residents left behind crowded, aging apartments for the convenience of the suburbs. The construction of the Dufferin-Montmorency Expressway displaced even more families. Businesses followed, as four malls were built between 1958 and 1962: Place Laurier, Place Sainte-Foy, Galeries de la Canardière, and Galeries de Charlesbourg.



Saint-Joseph Street before the construction of Mail Saint-Roch

Disposition d'arbustes dans un secteur de la rue Saint-Joseph (extérieur), between 1970 and 1979. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N403924. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

This exodus was sorely felt on Saint-Joseph Street, where much of Quebec City's shopping was centered through the first half of the 20th century. Beginning in the 1950s, the suburbs added half a kilometre's worth of commercial space per year, the vast majority of which was easily accessible by car. Saint-Joseph Street couldn't help but suffer: every year, more businesses closed, and by the mid-1960s, the 150 members of the street's merchants' association were searching for solutions. Representatives

from the association and the city went on a fact-finding mission to the U.S. to examine the growing trend of "pedestrian malls," in which a major downtown shopping street was closed to vehicular traffic.

Sufficiently impressed with what they found, Saint-Joseph Street was pedestrianized in 1968 between Langelier Street and Saint-Roch Street. It had little effect, however, as the stretch was shortly re-opened to automobile traffic. Sales on the street declined 7% between 1966 and 1969.

Unlike in many other cities where downtown renovation efforts were desperate, top-down initiatives imposed by the city, Quebec City's government seemed curiously resigned to the fate of the district. The city's municipal planning department described the urban exodus as "normal, inevitable, and irreversible," and indicated that the decline would continue.¹ Nevertheless, the Saint-Joseph merchants' association pushed forward with an audacious idea, developing plans to build a one-

story roof over a re-pedestrianized section of the street to create a true "downtown mall." The four-million-dollar construction cost was to be eventually borne by the merchants themselves. While the city would cover the up-front costs and not charge taxes for the first two years, the association would pay \$250,000 annually in subsequent years.

The roof, the merchants' "collective dream,"² was completed in November 1974, creating the "longest covered street in the world"

¹ Roch Desgagne, "Exode des commerces vers l'ouest de Québec," *Le Soleil*, July 7, 1975.

² Caroline Gaudreault, "Le mail Saint-Roch," *Tout le monde en parlait*, aired May 31, 2011, on Radio-Canada.



Mail Saint-Roch Interior

Mail Saint-Roch - Disposition des bancs et arbustes (intérieur), between 1970 and 1979. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N403927. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

at 450 metres between Couronne Street and Monseigneur-Gauvreau Street.³ The mall's roof featured the heavy concrete construction typical of its time, but also included Plexiglas sunlights to bring daylight in. Shoppers throughout the region were attracted by the Mail's novelty of being the only such covered street in North America, and many of the middle-income, and mostly older, remaining residents of Saint-Roch appreciated the convenience of the Mail.

The Decline of the "Collective Dream"

The new shopping centre was initially seen as both a financial and an urban design success, with the \$45 million in sales on the street in 1973 increasing to \$65 million by 1980. Meanwhile, the Mail was garnering positive attention outside the city. In 1978, the head of Université de Montréal's architecture school praised its "excellent approach" in creating a pleasant, comfortable atmosphere,⁴ while *La Presse* declared the Mail "an exceptional architectural initiative

[and] a step in the right direction of urban development," and reported that Montreal was strongly considering building a similar roof over Saint-Hubert Street (today's Plaza Saint-Hubert).⁵ A separate group of Saint-Joseph Street merchants west of the Mail even pushed to have the roof extended to Langelier Street—a project that never came to fruition.

Yet, by the 1980s, Saint-Roch's decline was accelerating and the Mail was starting to suffer the effects. The older neighborhood residents who had made up much of the mall's clientele during the 1970s were dying out, leaving behind a lower-income



Mail Saint-Roch Exterior

Mail Saint-Roch, 1977. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N402850. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

population that faced a number of social problems. Owners of stores in the mall were neglecting the residences on the upper floors of their buildings, and the mall's last two department stores, Syndicat and Paquet, closed in July 1981. Taxes from the retailers weren't enough to cover the expenses of keeping the mall open: the city was now

³ "Saint-Roch: une histoire populaire," accessed October 21, 2021, <https://saint-roch.blogspot.com/p/la-renovation-urbaine.html#5>

⁴ Cited in Jean-Pierre Bonhomme, "Le mail Saint-Roch à Québec: un pas dans la bonne direction," *La Presse*, June 30, 1978.

⁵ *Ibid.*

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subsidizing the Mail to the tune of \$300,000 per year.

The mall retailers' association was also in constant squabbles with the city's government over other local redevelopment initiatives that were eating up valuable parking spaces. Situated in an increasingly low-income neighborhood, retailers were reliant on customers from other areas. These potential patrons, however, were accustomed to free, convenient parking at suburban malls. In addition to the novelty of the Mail wearing off and the waning number of stores that appealed to them, the lack of dedicated parking was yet another deterrent.

Furthermore, with the Lauberivière shelter nearby and increasing deinstitutionalization from the Robert-Giffard hospital, the Mail was progressively becoming a refuge for destitute and homeless people, especially during the winter months. Its problems were exacerbated by logistical issues that suburban malls didn't face. Residents still lived on the stores' upper floors and entered their buildings at ground level inside the mall, meaning that the Mail had to be open 24 hours to accommodate their comings and goings. Additionally, Saint-Joseph was still technically a city street, so as long as those inside continued walking the corridor of the Mail, neither the city nor the merchants could ask them to leave, meaning that



Woolworth's department store in Mail Saint-Roch

Woolworth (intérieur), between 1970 and 1979. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N403873. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

homeless individuals would spend winter days simply wandering the mall aimlessly.

With Saint-Roch's reputation becoming increasingly poor, the Mail's name was changed to the Mail Centre-Ville in 1983, to little effect. Local media didn't help matters by frequently taking shots at the mall, describing it as "the crescent of poverty in Quebec City"⁶ and "where the city's homeless and winos [robineux] live."⁷ Perhaps searching a bit too hard for ways to portray the Mail in a negative light, columnists also fretted over rather benign occurrences such as leather-wearing teenagers and malfunctioning escalators.⁸

⁶ Denis Angers, "Course de 3 ans entre la survie ou l'agonie," *Le Soleil*, June 16, 1981.

⁷ Jocelyne Lepage, "Armand Vaillancourt, l'irréductible," *La Presse*, March 20, 1992.

⁸ Alain Bouchard, "Les accotés du mail sont regardés de haut," *Le Soleil*, March 8, 1985.

The Fall of the Mall

By the start of the 1990s, Saint-Roch had bottomed out. In 1991, the neighborhood, now down to 6,000 residents, had an unemployment rate of 12% and the highest concentration of poverty in Canada. Biker gangs used storefronts in the Mail as fronts for drug trafficking operations. News reports of armed robbery, drug use, and drug dealing at the mall appeared with increasing frequency, and a shooting inside the mall as *Midnight Mass* was letting out from the adjoining Église Saint-Roch on Christmas Eve 1992 left a victim paralyzed.⁹

Praised not so long ago, the Mail was now depicted as a “ghetto”¹⁰ and a “Berlin Wall”¹¹ that was “asphyxiating the neighborhood.”¹² In 1990, *La Presse*, which 12 years prior had cheerily declared the mall an “exceptional architectural initiative,” now blared that it was “an architectural heresy, a horror in the field of urban planning, an example of what not to do when you want to reinvigorate a business district.”¹³ Most of the stores within the mall were of the lower-end variety, such as dollar stores and pawn shops, while its physical structure was deteriorating, with upkeep and repairs becoming larger issues. The city’s subsidy was now up to \$750,000 per year.

Meanwhile, the city, led by mayor Jean-Paul L’Allier, was planting

the seeds for Saint-Roch’s turnaround. A large vacant parcel between Couronne and Dorchester Streets was renovated into the Saint-Roch Gardens (today the Jean-Paul L’Allier Gardens). City offices were moved into a renovated Dominion Corset building on Charest Boulevard, while the Méduse artists’ cooperative on Côte d’Abraham opened in 1995. Later in the decade, the École nationale d’administration publique and the Télé-Université moved into the sector, bringing new life and vibrancy into the district, and encouraging other private investment in Saint-Roch. In all, over \$270 million was invested in the neighborhood between 1992 and 2000.

A shift in living tastes was also taking place. Quebec City residents initially moved



Visitors to Mail Saint-Roch in its heyday

Mail Saint-Roch (intérieur) vue de la baie vitrée et personnes sur les bancs, between 1970 and 1979. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N403895. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

⁹ “Hold-up dans le Mail,” *Le Soleil*, September 30, 1992; Louis-Guy Lemieux, “La poudre à fous,” *Le Soleil*, March 13, 1995; “Arrestation,” *Le Soleil*, May 6, 1992; Gilles Ouellet, “Tentative de meurtre en pleine nuit de Noël au mail Saint-Roch,” *Le Soleil*, December 26, 1992.

¹⁰ Jean Cimon and André Robitaille, “Quartier Saint-Roch: un bon départ!” *Le Soleil*, March 18, 1992.

¹¹ Laurent Laplante, “Saint-Roch: un pari généreux,” *Le Soleil*, February 28, 1992.

¹² Louis Bélanger, “Québec: un mail centre-ville à ciel ouvert,” *Le Soleil*, June 4, 1990.

¹³ Martial Dassylva, “En pleine Basse-Ville, le Rousillon Quebec,” *La Presse*, January 13, 1990.

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to the suburbs to escape decrepit urban dwellings: by 1960, 50% of Quebec City's housing stock was considered substandard. But by the late 1990s, a new generation, which had grown up with no memory of the conditions many of their parents had lived in as children, was starting to recognize the limitations of suburbs: their homogeneity, lack of walkability, overreliance on private vehicles, and increasingly long commutes to downtown offices.

In short, younger people were increasingly drawn to city living, and with its inexpensive rents, student population, and new cultural offerings, the rapidly improving Saint-Roch was becoming an attractive option. Malls were for the suburbs: to try and shoehorn one into a downtown now just seemed like an awkward, inappropriate fit.

The Mail's days were numbered. By the 1990s, talk of removing the roof had begun as part of larger revitalization efforts on Saint-Joseph Street. The opinion was not unanimous: local residents who used the

mall were against re-opening the street to vehicle traffic, while the disadvantaged in the neighborhood were concerned about losing their place of refuge. After a few years of discussion, the removal of a 300-metre section of the roof began between Pont Street and Couronne Street. Saint-Joseph Street was officially reopened with a Christmas parade on December 4, 2000. The remaining part of the roof was removed in the summer of 2006, unveiling a Saint-Joseph Street similar to what exists today.

Conclusion

It is easy to view the Mail as a ham-handed urban development scheme doomed to fail. Yet, its later struggles were less the fault of the Mail itself and more due to the surrounding neighborhood's decline, which became more and more pronounced in the 1980s and 1990s. By the time the neighborhood began its renaissance at the turn of the millennium, the Mail was no longer a novel, innovative addition to Saint-Roch, but an



Brunet Pharmacy in Mail Saint-Roch

Pharmacie Brunet, between 1975 and 1985. Archives de la Ville de Québec, Fonds Ville de Québec, N400722. Droits réservés Ville de Québec

outdated, decaying burden, unappealing to the younger, trendier new residents of the area.

The Mail eventually outlived its usefulness. But upon closer examination, it was an admirably creative, ambitious project that initially accomplished its goal: creating a pleasant, profitable, successful urban shopping alternative in the face of ferocious suburban competition. Credit for the early success should lie principally with the merchants, some of whom had been on Saint-Joseph Street for a century and were willing to gamble on an innovative solution. Meanwhile, responsibility for the grimness of the later years rests more on a city government that, witnessing the decades-long decline of one of its grand commercial avenues, shrugged and declared the neighborhood's bleak fate to be "normal, inevitable and irreversible," only changing course years later, after Saint-Roch had hit rock bottom and had dragged the Mail down with it.

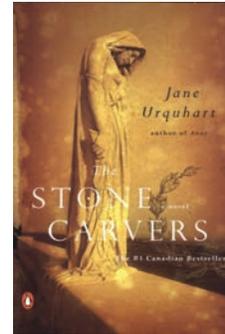
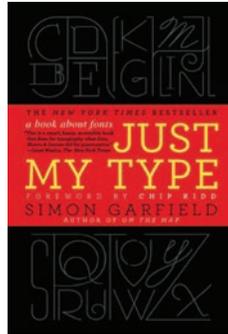
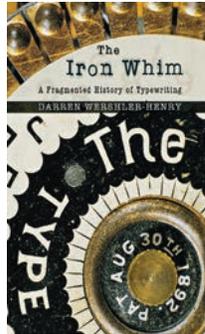
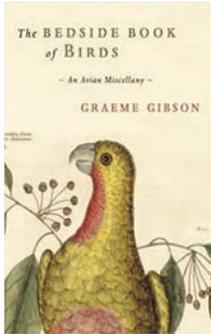
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| Library Pages

It's Time

By Britta Gundersen-Bryden



“On the Shelf”—a recurring thematic review of some interesting, important, or just entertaining books in the Library of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.

After twenty-five columns over the past ten years, it is time for a hiatus (an appropriate word because I intend to keep contributing to *Society Pages*). That said, this column is a slight departure from previous ones, which tended to be based on a theme of some sort: books about rivers, food, or explorers, to name a few.

This column is a result of the return of in-person opportunities to browse the Library shelves, including those containing new arrivals. Searching the Library collection online, checking out e-books, or collecting selected books from the front desk certainly has served Lit & Hist members well during the past all-too-many months. Yet there is nothing quite like tilting the head sideways to read a title, carefully removing a book to gaze at the front cover, reading the back description, flipping to the inside jacket notes, and, finally, deciding to check out a “real” book.

Given the chance to visit the Library in person, I found many books (25, in fact) that caught my fancy. I now have a personal list that will keep me turning pages through the winter and well into 2022.

Pairing Catchy Titles: Just for Fun

I could pair Graeme Gibson’s *The Bedside Book of Birds: An Avian Miscellany* (2021 edition, with a new forward by Margaret Atwood) with *Lucy Audubon: A Biography* (2008) by Carolyn E. DeLatte or possibly with Marge Piercy’s memoir, *Sleeping with Cats* (2002).

Another entertaining pairing would be *The Iron Whim: A Fragmented History of Typewriting* (2005) by Darren Wershler-Henry and *Just My Type: A Book About Fonts* (2010) by Simon Garfield.

Catching Up

Sometimes I enjoy books by certain authors and would like to read more of their work. Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Stone Carvers* (2001), the story of the devastating impact of World War I on a Canadian family, falls into this category.

And then there are some books I haven’t read just because I haven’t gotten around to them. Hilary Mantel’s historical novel *Bring Up the Bodies* (2001) is now on my list.

History Plus

The books in the Library reflect the interests of Lit & Hist members, so it's no wonder that there is an abundance of history offerings on the shelves. Here are three I've put on my personal winter reading list:

Yankees in Canada (1980) is a collection of travel essays edited by James Doyle. Many American travellers, including several well-known writers, visited Canada in the 19th century. Though many found Quebec charming—or at least quaint—most were certain that their northern neighbours would soon be absorbed by the United States.

The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montréal (2006), by Afua Cooper, recounts the dramatic true story of Marie-Joseph Angélique, a 29-year-old enslaved Black woman hanged for starting a fire in the heart of Montreal in 1734.

Le chien d'or (aka *The Golden Dog*, 2012 edition by McGill-Queen's University Press) is by William Kirby. Though a novel, the recounting of Quebec's history and legends casts this work as something more than a simple work of fiction. At 900 pages, this well-known epic may last me into the spring.

My Popcorn Books

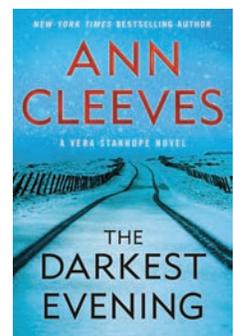
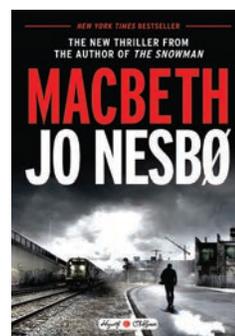
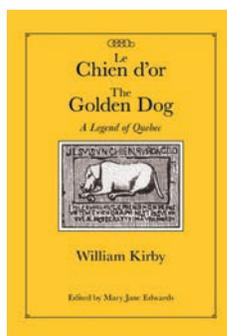
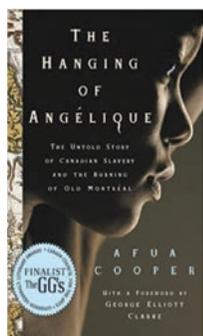
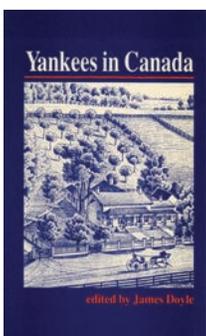
On a plane, on a train, or curled up in my favourite chair, I've been known to devour "popcorn books," as I call them because, like freshly-made popcorn drenched with real butter, they are well-written page turners that I can't put down. Just think of J. K. Rowling's

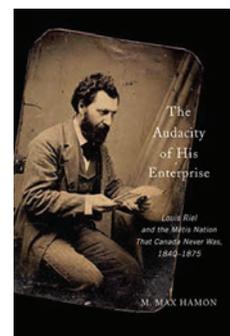
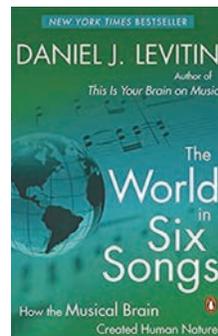
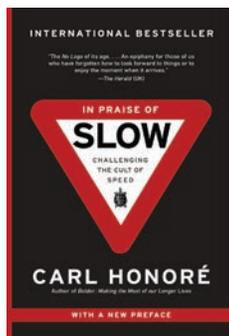
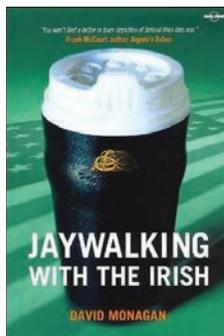
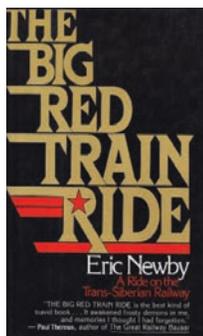
Harry Potter series, Louise Penny's Three Pines (and further afield) best-sellers, Ken Follett's works of historical fiction, James Lee Burke's New Orleans detective yarns, and Kathy Reichs' mix of science and murder in Montreal and points south.

I do like a good mystery (as the paragraph above demonstrates) and have read some Nordic noir, but there are a few writers of this genre that I've missed so far. I can correct that by taking Jo Nesbø's *Macbeth* (2018) off the shelf.

Locked up, locked down, or simply staying close to home, I'm sure I'm not the only Lit & Hist member who has filled some (many?) hours watching gripping series on screen, including series based on popular books. I do like the on-screen version of that intrepid Northumberland detective inspector, Vera Stanhope, but now I can read *The Darkest Evening* (2020) to see how Ann Cleeves creates her characters and crafts her plots.

Back in the 1970s, fresh out of university, I found my first job as junior secondary teacher in a small town. I wanted my students to enjoy reading, but our school had no library. I created a small bookshelf in my classroom and stocked it with second-hand books. I read every one first. To engage the boys in my classes I added as many science fiction titles as possible, which meant I read books by the likes of Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, and, of course, Frank Herbert. Now that Denis Villeneuve's film *Dune* has been released, I'm sure I'm not the only library user who will want to check out *Dreamer of Dune: The Biography of Frank Herbert* (2003), by his son, Brian Herbert.





Have Passport, Will Travel (Soon, I Hope)

Turkey is not on my list of places I'd really like to go, but many people I know rave about this country that straddles East and West. Maybe if I took *Istanbul: The Imperial City* (1996) off the shelf, I'd have a better understanding of why I should re-visit my list. Author John Freely has written numerous books about Turkey, in case I want to know more.

The Big Red Train Ride (1978) describes Eric Newby's trip across the former Soviet Union. My father made a Trans-Siberian train trip about that time. I wonder if he and the author had similar adventures?

I couldn't resist adding David Monaghan's *Jaywalking with the Irish* (2004) to my list. Was it the maps inside or the photo of a pint of Guinness on the cover that drew me in?

Esoteric

Some books seem just plain interesting—at least to me. The following three titles caught my attention:

In Praise of Slow: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed (2004) by Carl Honoré isn't just about the "slow food" movement or about the personal slowing down that often accompanies aging. The past two years have caused many people to slow down and challenge the idea of "instant everything." Honoré provides a rationale and framework for such reflection.

The World in Six Songs (2006) by Daniel J. Levitin has a catchy title on the spine but seemed to be something

much different when I read the jacket notes. I think I'll give it a try anyway.

The title says it all. *The Audacity of His Enterprise: Louis Riel and the Métis Nation that Canada Never Was, 1840–1875* (2019) by M. Max Hamon reminds me that I need to learn more about this period of Canadian history.

Young At Heart

Younger readers can build their own lists. I would have liked the following books—forget the past tense, I would still enjoy them.

Greta and the Giants (2019), by Zoë Tucker and illustrated by Zoe Persico, is about Greta Thunberg, and there is no doubt who the "giants" are. With a 1996 edition of A. A. Milne's *The Complete Tales and Poems of Winnie-the-Pooh* I can re-visit the entire Pooh canon. *Pirate's Passage* (2006), written and illustrated by William Gilkerson, caught my eye. I've often been intrigued by pirate tales, and this one is set off the coast of Nova Scotia. I'd check it out if I were (much) younger.

What a title! What illustrations! I'd snap up *Professor Astro Cat's Frontiers of Space* (2016) by Dr. Dominic Walliman and Ben Newman if I were ten years old.

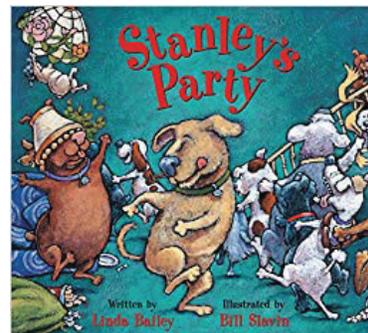
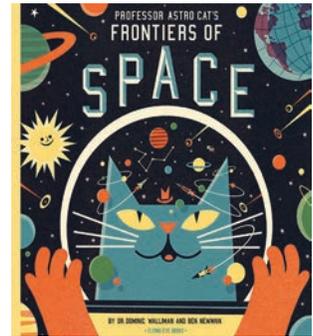
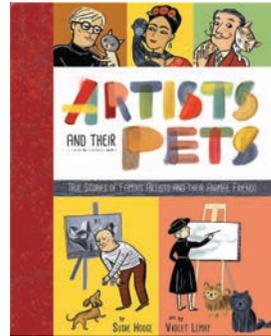
In *Artists and Their Pets: Stories of Famous Artists and Their Animal Friends* (2018), author Susie Hodge and illustrator Violet Lemay explain that cats and dogs were many artists' pets of choice—but there were a few odd animal companions too.

My Favourite Book in the Library (at Least This Year)

My very favorite book in the Library is a children's book, *Stanley's Party* (2003), written by Linda Bailey and illustrated by Bill Slavin. I mean, who wouldn't smile at a colourful cover picture of a goofy dog, dancing with his friends while wearing a lampshade on his head? However, my affection for Stanley and his guests goes a bit deeper. I worked for the British Columbia Ministry of Education for many years. Colleagues in the early literacy unit would select books to send to schools each year. One year it was Stanley's turn. Large posters of the book's cover were produced so teachers could display them in their classrooms. I asked for a poster of *Stanley's Party*. I put it up in my office to remind me (and anyone who stopped in for a meeting or just a chat) that we were doing important work but that we had to remember to have fun, too. When I retired, I passed Stanley along to a friend. It was a real treat to meet Stanley again in the Library.

And so, with a smile (but no lampshade), I conclude "On the Shelf"—at least for a while.

– BGB



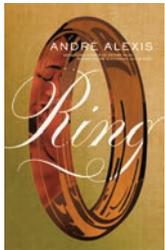
The Library is now open for in-person services
for members.

Please visit morrin.org for more details.

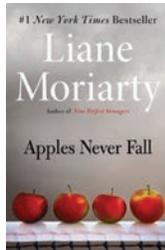
New Aquisitions

Here are some of the new titles in the Library's collection.

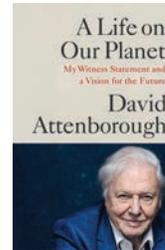
Books with an * are also available on OverDrive.



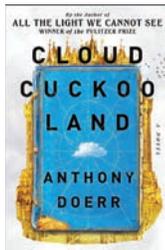
Ring *
André Alexis
Fiction
A384 2021



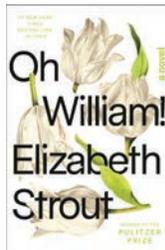
Apples Never Fall
Liane Moriarty
Fiction
M854 2021



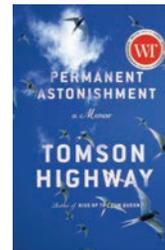
A Life on Our Planet
David Attenborough
Non-Fiction
508 A883



Cloud Cuckoo Land
Anthony Doerr
Fiction
D652 2021



Oh William!
Elizabeth Strout
Fiction
S925 2021



Permanent Astonishment
Tomson Highway
Memoir
BIO H638 2021



What Strange Paradise
Omar El-Akkad
Fiction
E37 2021



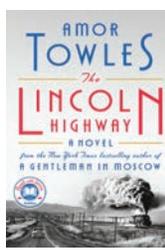
Fight Night *
Miriam Toews
Fiction
T643 2021



Taste
Stanley Tucci
Memoir
BIO T886 2021



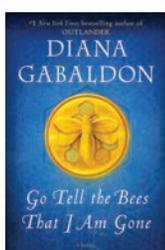
Crossroads *
Jonathan Franzen
Fiction
F837 2021



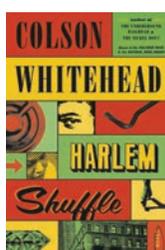
The Lincoln Highway *
Amor Towles
Fiction
T742 2021



Hunting by Stars
Cherie Dimaline
Young Adult
YA DIM 2021



Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone
Diana Gabaldon
Fiction
G112 2021



Harlem Shuffle
Colson Whitehead
Fiction
W592 2019

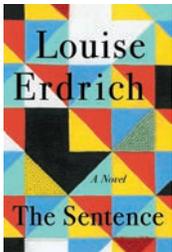


Carol and the Pickle Toad
Esme Shapiro
Junior Picture
JP SHA 2021

What's New on OverDrive

Here are some of the new e-book and audiobook titles now available. Log in to the Morrin Centre's OverDrive system at morrin.overdrive.com with your library card to check out our latest acquisitions.

Books with an * are also available in a physical copy in the Library.



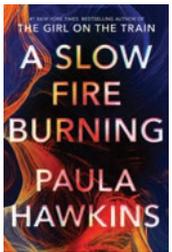
The Sentence
Louise Erdrich
Fiction



The Lost Apothecary
Sarah Penner
Fiction



We, Jane
Aimee Wall
Fiction



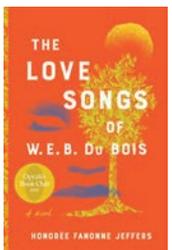
A Slow Fire Burning
Paula Hawkins
Fiction



State of Terror *
Louise Penny &
Hillary Rodham
Clinton
Fiction



*On the Origin of the
Deadliest Pandemic
in 100 Years*
Elaine Dewar
Non-Fiction



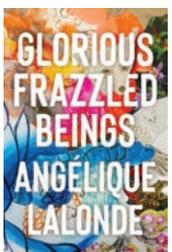
*The Love Songs of
W.E.B. Du Bois*
Honoree Fanonne
Jeffers
Fiction



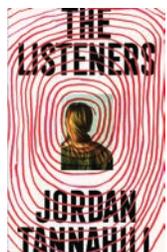
The Subtweet
Vivek Shraya
Fiction



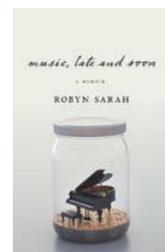
*Baking for the
Holidays*
Sarah Kieffer
Cooking



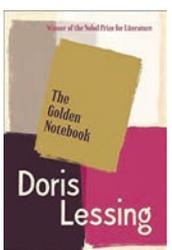
*Glorious Frazzled
Beings*
Angélique Lalonde
Fiction



The Listeners
Jordan Tannahill
Fiction



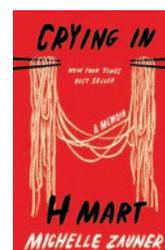
music, late and soon
Robyn Sarah
Memoir



*The Golden
Notebook* *
Doris Lessing
Fiction

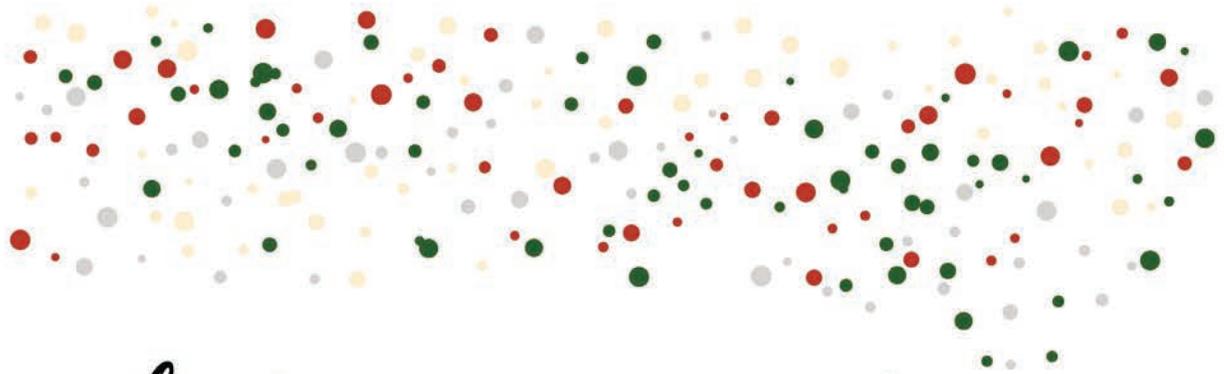


*A Conspiracy in
Belgravia*
Sherry Thomas
Fiction



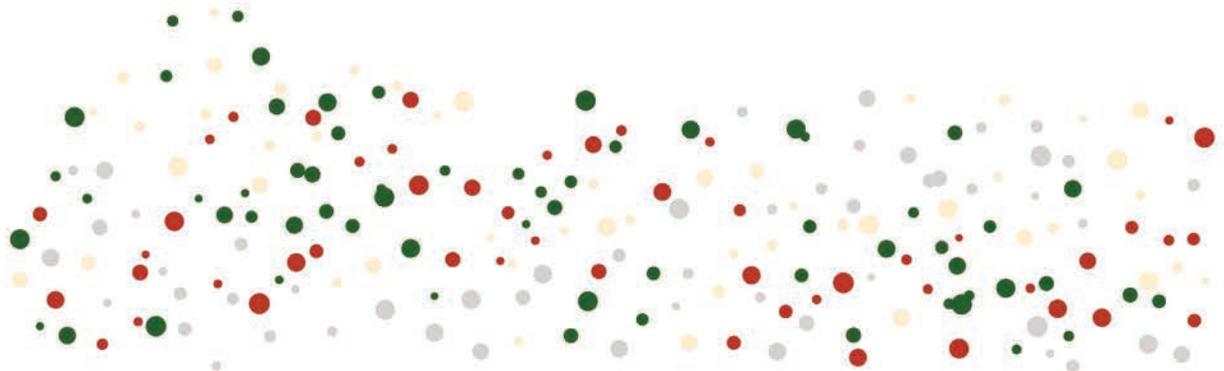
Crying in H Mart
Michelle Zauner
Memoir





Thank you to our Volunteers

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Happy Holidays!



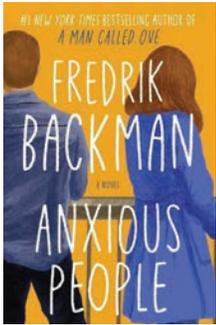
The Morrin Centre team wishes you a joyous holiday season with peace and cheer in the New Year!

Book Reviews

Anxious People

by Fredrik Backman

Book review by Françoise Carrière



A few years ago, my husband and I came across a Swedish movie that absolutely charmed us with its candor: *A Man Called Ove*. When I learned that the author of the book, Fredrik Backman, had published a new novel, I approached it favourably. I was not disappointed.

Anxious People is Backman's latest book. Although it is considered a crime or mystery novel, don't be fooled. It is a much deeper story about people and their struggles with life. Being labeled as a mystery novel makes it easier to read about anxiety, the evil of the century, without raising your own anxiety levels!

The book starts with a bank robbery that becomes a hostage-taking situation. The small-town policemen who deal with the crime are a father and son duo who, as the story unfolds, have their own personal issues. The book is filled with gems, such as the words of a father about to jump off the bridge: "Do you know what the worst thing about being a parent is? That you are always judged by your worst moments... Parents are defined by their mistakes." The older policeman, who is overprotective of his son, compares himself to those penguins that squat on top of a stone because they do not want to accept that the egg has gone.

The despair of being a parent is also embodied in the bank robber/hostage taker, whose motive is to steal enough money to be able to provide a decent apartment for their children after a bad divorce. All the characters have noble motives but go about reaching their goals by making terrible decisions. Zara, the banker, often observes that the characters are all "idiots." But as the story unfolds, we realize that, on the contrary, the characters are just clumsy at expressing their needs and woes.

Universal anxiety-inducing themes such as genuine long-lasting love, children, money, the meaning of life, generation gaps, capitalism, gender identity, the meaning of success, technology, and more are touched upon with humour and profound insight. The power of friendship, hope, and forgiveness appears to be the antidote to despair.

As you read, you will be saying to yourself, "So true! So very true!" and find words of wisdom you will want to print and stick on your living room walls, as reminders. Without revealing too much about the ending, here is just a tip: keep those tissues close at hand!

Anxious People (Simon & Schuster, 2020).



Aria

by Nazanine Hozar

Book review by Maude Boucher



Nazanine Hozar, a woman born in Tehran during the Iranian Revolution, moved to Canada in 1985 with her family. In 2019, she published her first novel, *Aria*.

This incredible story takes readers through the life of a young girl, from her birth in the 1950s to her adulthood during the Iranian Revolution in 1979. It gives a different, though realistic, perspective on how the revolution affected the people of Iran.

Becoming an orphan on the day of her birth, the little girl was found by a man who had no idea how much she would change his life when he named her Aria, "after all the world's pains and all the world's loves." And in turn, he would also have an important place in her life, becoming her family.

Aria went on to have three mother figures in her life who all helped shape her character; they taught her

different things about life that helped her when she herself become a mother years later. Mixing friendship, love, and family, the novel *Aria* presents the harsh truths of life. Although it is a work of fiction, it is still based on the reality of the Iranian people before and during the revolution—and Hozar manages to change the narrative a little by showing that reality through the eyes of an orphan.

Having read *Aria* at just 17 years old, the novel made me better understand and see the difficulties of the entire world, and not just Iran. This book enlightened me about the different realities people live across the world, and it showed me how strongly people fought, and still do, for their liberty and their beliefs. Even though I lost part of my youth during the pandemic, it could never equal the wars, revolutions, and deaths that some children have faced in other parts of the world.

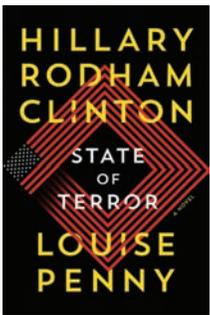
Aria (Vintage Canada, 2019).



State of Terror

by Hillary Rodham Clinton & Louise Penny

Book review by Gail Cameron



a while to get immersed in the story, but then I was hooked!

State of Terror revolves around Secretary of State Ellen Adams, who has been appointed to the newly sworn-in U.S. cabinet by President Douglas Williams, who defeated incumbent President Eric Dunn. Adams had been the head of a media chain and had not supported

Williams. Her appointment seems to be a way to silence her opinions. We quickly learn of terrorist bombings in London, Paris, and Frankfurt that result in the death of Pakistani nuclear physicists. Who are these terrorists? And what do they want? The story takes us to the backcountry of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. Terrorists can be anywhere and can be found where we least expect.

Secretary Adams and her team must find out who is behind these attacks and neutralize the imminent threats to the homeland. Her team includes both her son and daughter as well as her best friend, State Department counselor Betsy Jameson. There are many twists and turns, and a few veiled references to a certain former president. Our much-loved village of Three Pines and its inhabitants even make a cameo! What a treat! The novel is a testament to loyalty, friendship, and devotion.

This is a wake-up call about our times: there is too much power in too many hands that can be corrupted. Clinton clearly has the political background to contribute very knowledgeable insight into this very complex world arena. Although it was very politically based, it was a good read. I believe that there will be a second collaboration down the road. Something to look forward to! Happy reading!

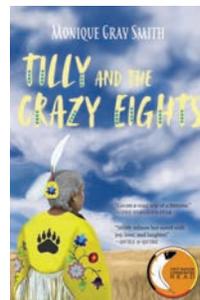
State of Terror (Simon & Schuster/St. Martin's Press, 2012) * Also on OverDrive.



Tilly and the Crazy Eights

by Monique Gray Smith

Book review by Susan Saul



Longlisted for Canada Reads 2021, *Tilly and the Crazy Eights* is a timely book that touches on issues affecting First Nation communities as well as Reconciliation. On the surface, the novel is a light and enjoyable read, but it actually covers many serious subjects and issues.

During their weekly Stitch and Bitch, a group of

Indigenous Elders from a rural reservation in British Columbia decide to help Sarah (a member of their group who went through chemo the year before) fulfill her wish of dancing at the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Along the way to the Gathering, they make stops so that each participant can experience something from their “bucket list.” Sarah, Anne, Rose, Lucy, Bea, Mabel, Chuck, and Poncho are joined by the younger Tilly as they embark upon their adventure—and along the way they evolve into a close-knit group who share responsibility for each other. As they travel, they learn things about each other and themselves, laugh, argue, love, and become a true family. In many ways, this is a coming-of-age story for people who didn’t have the luxury to do so before.

The characters are gracious, warm, and sympathetic; they use the opportunity of being physically distanced from their normal lives to take the time to talk, listen, learn, and grow. For such a slim novel, this book manages to address many serious topics: relationships, residential schools, substance abuse, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women crisis, racism, homosexuality, illness, and death, but in such a gentle way, and via integration with the characters and the voyage, that the reader doesn’t recognize the depth of the material immediately. The book elicits a wide range of emotions: empathy, laughter, and sadness, without being overbearing or coercive.

Tilly and the Crazy Eights could have easily been even twice as long, allowing for more in-depth development of the characters and further discussion of the issues. As it is, it is an easy-to-read, cozy story that successfully introduces topics for the reader to ponder and inspires them to investigate further.

Tilly and the Crazy Eights (Second Story Press, 2018). * Also on OverDrive.

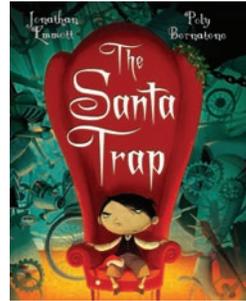


The Santa Trap

Written by Jonathan Emmett

Illustrated by Poly Bernatene

Book review by Antoine Dumont



Christmas stories are often heartfelt and warming. They feature kind and thoughtful characters who eventually prove themselves in front of an overwhelmingly un-Christmas-like character whose heart they change regarding the holiday. And this makes sense:

Christmas comes at the darkest and coldest time of the year, beckoning us to come together and cherish each other’s presence.

The Christmas story I am reviewing turns completely away from the canon’s norms by subverting expectations from the start.

The Santa Trap, written by Jonathan Emmett and illustrated by Poly Bernatene, lets us know right away that this is not your usual holiday story by making it clear through the opening words and images that the picture book contains neither peace nor goodwill.

The story revolves around Bradley Bartleby, a spoiled but ingenious child, hell-bent on catching Santa Claus and extorting him for any and all gifts that the man in red refuses to give. Dynamite, tigers, and guillotines—nothing is off the table when it comes to Bradley’s plan. Hopefully, this time around, Bradley will obtain his long list of presents. Or will he?

From the outset, the main character, Bradley, is so unlikeable that one cannot help but be amused when his machinations go inevitably wrong. It is reminiscent of how one is amused at Wile E. Coyote’s mishaps in Saturday morning cartoons. The story makes for a hilarious ride for both adults and children. The author also provides helpful but subtle hints for reading the story aloud by adapting the size of the fonts for screams as well as onomatopoeias. The tale is complemented by Bernatene’s over-the-top but lovely full-page art. Using

vivid colours, the story is brought to life through clever perspectives, with an energy similar to that of a comic book.

All in all, I heartily recommend this picture book to families this upcoming holiday season. It is funny, beautifully illustrated, and serves as a clever cautionary tale about gratitude.

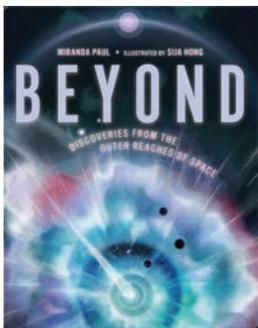
The Santa Trap (Peachtree Publishers, 2012).

Beyond: Discoveries from the Outer Reaches of Space

Written by Miranda Paul

Illustrated by Sija Hong

Book review by Jeanne Lebossé-Gautron



Even before you reach the title page, *Beyond* enchants you. Sija Hong's illustrations and Miranda Paul's free verse poetry bring to life a world of etheric, gently curling representations of space, planets, and the star dust in between. Not only are Hong's illustrations gorgeous and well worth reading the

book for in and of themselves, but Paul's writing both teaches and entices. There is something charming about the shape of the words and the excitement that fills them. "Are these fantastical places real?" she asks, immediately answering with a gushing, "yes, yes, yes."

Throughout the book, words and pictures strike a wonderful balance of beauty and information. Little bubbles let you know the "space addresses" of the planets, stars, black holes, and more that are presented, while poetry communicates the shapes, colours, and particularities. The entire book reads like a painter describing a prized painting.

Despite the fact that, officially, the book is marketed towards children, I can say with absolute honesty that it was a pleasure to read. I read it multiple times in a row, not only because I was writing this review, but also (and mainly) because a single read-through is not enough to appreciate each page to its fullest. Fluffy clouds, angular mountains, tentacular nebulas, and innumerable dots and swirls and diamond-like stars fill the pages with colour and life, each new spread delighting the eye anew.

For the scientifically minded, or simply the curious, the book also offers details about the cosmic places presented in the poems, as well as a list of additional physical and digital resources and a very complete bibliography.

"You are small," the book concludes, "but the adventures that await you are infinite."

Beyond: Discoveries from the Outer Reaches of Space (Millbrook Press, 2021). * Only on OverDrive.

*A Morrin Centre
Membership...*

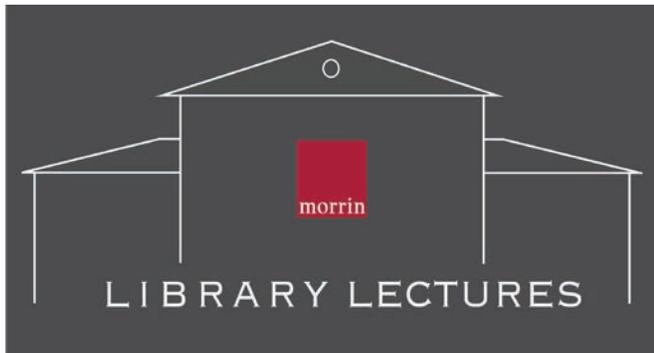
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| Events & Activities

Upcoming Events: General Public



The Morrin Centre is pleased to launch our new *Library Lectures* series! On **Tuesday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m.**, Professor Donald Fyson will give an online presentation titled "**The criminal past of the faubourg Saint-Jean, 1760-1914.**"

The Saint-Jean neighbourhood of Quebec City has always been vibrant, in more ways than one. This talk explores the criminal past of the faubourg, from its early days under the British régime through to the beginning of the 20th century. After a brief overview of crime and its repression in what was then a very ethnically and socially diverse part of the city, the talk concentrates on two aspects in particular: the sex trade and policing.

Donald Fyson is a professor of history at Université Laval, specializing in the history of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Quebec. He is particularly interested in the relationship between law, state, and society, notably as seen through the everyday operation of the criminal and civil justice systems, the police and local administration. His research has touched on topics such as homicides, imprisonment, and capital punishment. He is also the LHSQ's honorary librarian.

Visit morrin.org to sign up!



The history of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec and the Morrin Centre building extends back two centuries, and our spaces house numerous historical artifacts important to the English-speaking population of Quebec City. Our new *In These Spaces* project will allow community members to virtually access our historic spaces and the objects in them while participating in telling stories about the history of their community.

This project will feature a launch and five live-streamed presentations by local experts in domains related to each of our spaces, including science, architecture, and history. Community members will be invited to participate by sharing stories and opinions about the presented rooms and the various artifacts put on display on our social media throughout the project.

In These Spaces will launch in early 2022. Stay tuned for more information.

Upcoming Events: Youth Events



Storytime Online is a literacy program for children ages 3 to 7 that takes place on Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom. Each activity begins with the reading of a story followed by a craft inspired by the week's theme.

January 22	<i>Dragons Are the Worst!</i>
January 29	<i>What We'll Build</i>
February 5	<i>Pokko and the Drum</i>
February 12	<i>I Don't Want to Read this Book!</i>
February 19	<i>Norman Didn't Do It</i>
February 26	<i>Bear Is a Bear</i>
March 5	<i>See the Dog: Three Stories about a Cat</i>
March 12	<i>The Little Wooden Robot and the Log Princess</i>
March 19	<i>What's My Superpower?</i>
March 26	<i>The Night the Moon Went Missing</i>



The S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Club welcomes children ages 8 to 12 who love to experiment, create, and learn more about the world around them. The Club meets on Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.

January 18	Harry Potter Wand
January 25	Guest Microbiologist
February 1	Balloon Hovercraft
February 8	Fibonacci Art
February 15	Making Water Rise
February 22	Pan Flute
March 1	Oil Resistant Art
March 8	Guest Engineer
March 15	Mechanical Cardboard Hand
March 22	Colour Flowers
March 29	Friendship Bracelets

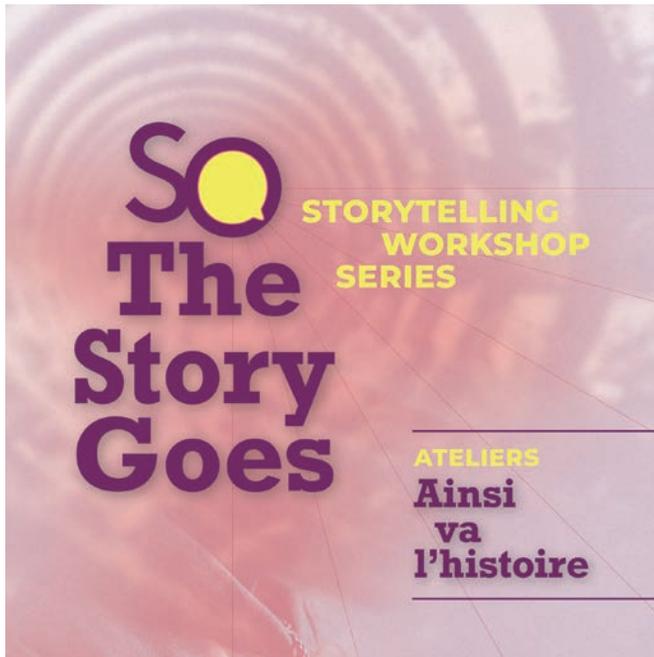
*Coming
soon*

Imagination 2022

The Morrin Centre team has been hard at work for the last few months preparing our upcoming Imagination Writers' Festival. Stay tuned for more information as authors confirm their participation and as the Morrin Centre team plans a dazzling in-person festival!

So the Story Goes: Narration in Many Forms

By Jeanne Lebossé-Gautron



Do you delight in learning about the workings behind literary works? Do you wonder what is behind the construction of this or that story or song? I certainly do, and the *So the Story Goes* project most definitely satisfied that craving!

From June 23 to October 13, a variety of artists presented their art and the inner workings thereof to enthusiastic participants through a series of online workshops organized by the Morrin Centre. We learned how to construct a tale with Bernard Crustin, a Quebecois “conteur”; adults and children alike pondered how to illustrate children’s books with illustrator Sophie Casson; we tried our hands at illustrating a mini graphic novel with writer Cassandra Luciuk and illustrator Nicole Marie Burton; we listened to singer Tess Leblanc deconstruct traditional songs; and finally, we were regaled with Indigenous stories by author Richard Van Camp. With such a varied offering, there was something for everyone in *So the Story Goes*!

In each workshop, participants were able to apply their new knowledge in creative ways, which lead to the sharing of art works, stories, and even just-written songs! How motivating it was to see participants young and old interact with the workshop guest(s) to get compliments and feedback on their creations. The in-person workshop with Tess Leblanc was particularly well attended, and most of the participants took their turn in the spotlight, reading, singing, or rapping their brand-new creations to the delight of everyone’s ears.

It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to announce the upcoming launch of a virtual exhibit for this project! On our website (morrin.org), you will soon be able to enjoy clips from the workshops, learn more about the artists, and discover some of the participants’ creations. Keep your eyes peeled: an invitation to the launch should be coming by way of our newsletter very soon. ■

From left to right:
Bernard Crustin, Sophie Casson, Cassandra Luciuk,
Nicole Marie Burton, Tess Leblanc, Richard Van Camp



This project is made possible thanks to our generous partners:

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Holiday Schedule at the Morrin Centre: Administration, Library Services, & Guided Tours

The Morrin Centre's administrative office will be **closed** from **December 22, 2021 to January 4, 2022** inclusively.

You will still be able to enjoy library services and guided tours on the following days:

LIBRARY SERVICES

Wednesday, December 22

Thursday, December 23

Wednesday, December 29

Thursday, December 30

GUIDED TOURS

Wednesday, December 22

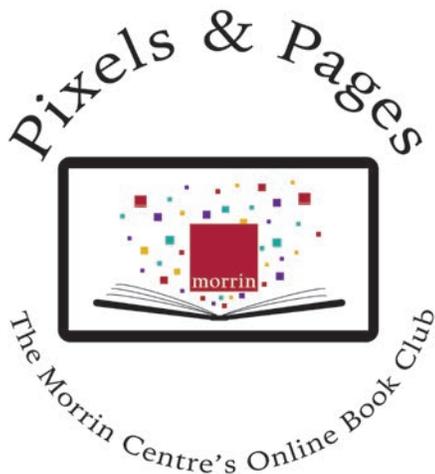
Thursday, December 23

Wednesday, December 29

Thursday, December 30

Sunday, January 2

Pixels & Pages: The Morrin Centre's Online Book Club



Interested in discussing literature with other book lovers? Missing connecting over books in the Library?

Come join *Pixels & Pages*, the Morrin Centre's online book club!

Our next meeting will be in January 2022.

Please email library@morrin.org to learn more or to sign up!

Thank you to our sponsors and partners:

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Meet Our New Education Coordinator: Antoine Dumont



For as long as I can remember, I have loved reading. I can still see myself, at a young age, going to wake my parents up at five in the morning to ask them to read Goldilocks to me for the thousandth time. Looking back, I think they must have been saints to accept so many early morning story times. But in doing so, they fostered in me a passion for books and a curiosity for learning. Any book in the kids' section of my local library was fair game. I would read any chance I could get: past my bedtime; when riding in the car and trying

desperately to catch whatever lamppost light shone on the pages; even in class when I should have been paying attention to the teacher. I remember one teacher even throwing a whiteboard eraser at me to get me to stop reading!¹

Teaching came naturally to me. I wanted to help younger minds develop the same love for reading and learning that I have had since my youth. Furthermore, a career in teaching would allow me to travel and explore, leading me to new vistas and cultures. I was able to work in both Ukraine and Italy before settling back in Quebec City. I then taught on the north and south shores before being hired by the Morrin Centre.

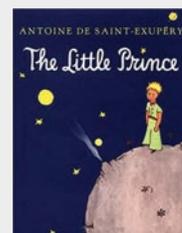
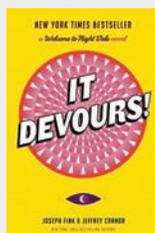
I have known about the Morrin Centre for a number of years. I first encountered the centre through a live action role play (LARP) activity, and both the institution and the building have become dear to my heart. The Library itself has both a gravitas and an aura that cannot be found anywhere else in Quebec City and it resonates deeply with me as a book lover.

As the Centre's new education coordinator, I want to foster a learning environment that is deeply rooted in cooperation and exploration. I truly believe that teamwork and experimentation is the best way for students of all ages to learn and grow. I am looking forward to working with our members of all ages through Storytime, the S.T.E.A.M club, and other future projects. ■

¹ I condone neither throwing erasers at students nor reading in class. Pay attention to your teachers!

Some books dear to Antoine's heart:

- It Devours!* by Joseph Fink & Jeffrey Cranor
- The Poppy War* by R. F. Kuang
- The Name of the Wind* by Patrick Rothfuss
- The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry





Meet Our New Library Clerk: Maude Boucher

Ever since I first set foot in the Morrin Centre's Library in 2019, I have not been able to leave it. I volunteered in the Library before the pandemic and then

worked as a guide during summer 2020. I am now back in the Library, where you will see me on weekends. The Morrin Centre is without a doubt my favorite place in Quebec City.

I am currently in the middle of my second, and final, year in CEGEP in the International Baccalaureate program with a focus on international engagement and languages. I am also very involved in school activities: I am the Student Council coordinator of my CEGEP,

I tutor students in philosophy, and I am on multiple school committees.

Passionate about languages, I am fluent in French, English, and Spanish, and can also speak a little bit of German and Chinese. I love languages and want to learn more of them as I take my next steps in the world. My dream is to work in a field that will allow me to travel and work at the same time, which is why I would like to study law and languages in university.

More about me: I also have a great interest in helping others and saving the environment, as well as learning about other cultures. Reading has been one of my great passions since I was 11 years old, when I first read Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, which has been my favourite book ever since. ■



Meet Our New Heritage Coordinator: Rosalie Simard

I'm excited to be a part of the Morrin Centre's team as the new Heritage Coordinator! I am originally from Scott, in the Beauce, but came to Quebec City in 2015 for my

studies at CEGEP St. Lawrence. It was during that time that I first heard about and visited the Morrin Centre. I attended a book launch in College Hall in 2016, and I fell completely in love with the building! I then left Quebec City to attend the University of Ottawa, where I completed my undergraduate degree in history with a minor in Celtic studies. While at University of Ottawa, I had the privilege of spending a semester abroad at the University of Glasgow and got to see the best that Scotland has to offer.

I am now back in Quebec City, close to my family and friends, and pursuing my master's in history at Université Laval. As a fan of Quebec City and Scottish history, my thesis will focus on the integration of the Scottish population and the preservation of Scottish culture in our beloved capital. The Morrin Centre is the perfect place for me to work during my studies since it was, and still is, the centre for English-speaking culture in the city. In my role as tour guide and heritage coordinator, I get to teach the public about important events in Quebec City's history—and constantly learn more about Scottish people and institutions that can benefit my research!

Outside of school and work, I enjoy reading fantasy, historical, and romance novels, listening to musicals, playing board games, and attending pub quizzes with my friends. ■



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With more and more guests returning to experience the Morrin Centre in person, it's the perfect time to help our National Historic Site maintain its splendor.

Just in time for the holiday season, we're calling on community and friends to participate in our 2021 fundraising campaign. **This year, funds raised during the campaign will go towards refinishing the Library's hardwood floors,** helping them to keep their luster for the tens of thousands of members and visitors who pass through every year.

It's a great opportunity to show your support for the Morrin Centre and help ensure that it remains a vibrant gathering place for our community for generations to come.

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