



LarsEncore

BULLETIN 80

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The Newsletter of the Association of Retired School Employees

President: Barb Randle
barbrandle01@gmail.com

Vice President: Wayne Clifford
wmclifford@gmail.com

Treasurer: Luce Pattison
ldpattison@bell.net

Secretary: Bill Stockwell
wstockwell@sympatico.ca

Phone Captain & Membership:
Lois Maeder-Alves
lois.maederalves@videotron.ca

Editor in Chief: Bill Stockwell
wstockwell@sympatico.ca

Associate Editor: Janice Tessier Murray
janicetessier@hotmail.com

Interest Groups Editor: Pam Greevy
pgreevy@hotmail.com

Tidbit Editor: Bryden Murray
bryden.murray@sympatico.ca



**JOIN
US**



L'ARSE has purchased a ZOOM membership which allows us to hold meetings of up to 100 participants without a time limit. Our Executive has met on ZOOM several times. Our book clubs have been meeting regularly on ZOOM since the beginning of the pandemic with good success. The Cyclopaths held a ZOOM cocktail hour on November 17th which was very enjoyable. It was great to be able to chat and catch up with other cyclists.

If your group would like to hold a meeting or social on Zoom, just email me at janicetessier@hotmail.com and I will be happy to set it up for you.

If this idea interests you, contact Janicetessier@hotmail.com

We're Still Active

The restrictions on group gatherings imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have certainly impacted on your Association. We are hoping that by mid-summer, however, L'ARSE will be able to announce resumption of the Le Manoir breakfasts, and plan a full schedule of the monthly Luncheons at local restaurants. This special bulletin gives an update on the activities underway in spring 2021.

LARSENCORE

SPECIAL UPDATE

Why Not Join A Group?

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President's Address/ Message du président

Who would have thought, when the world seemed to grind to a halt on March 13, 2020, that we would still be at it, a whole year later? I for one, thought that we would be inside, with schools cancelled, for a few weeks. Now we've celebrated our birthday, all four seasons, and all holidays in a new and different way. We've been through shut downs, reopenings, and curfew. Hopefully, we are seeing a light at the end of the tunnel – although it might be a faint, distant one.

We all miss things. Most of all, I miss human contact - hugs from my kids, grandkids, and friends. I miss breakfasts and lunches in restaurants. I miss the activities I did with friends – playing cards, shopping, going to movies or the theatre. I miss travelling farther than Pointe Claire (from Pincourt).

At the same time, I'm thankful for so much – a warm, comfortable home to live in, good books, online shopping, I'm thankful for Zoom and Face Time. I'm thankful for the mailman, who has delivered many cards this year. I'm thankful for outdoor, distanced visits, with family and friends. My front porch has never been so well used, through all kinds of weather. We're hardy Quebecers – I visited with my grandchildren on their way home from school every cold, or wet, or sunny day. I'm thankful for good friends, who have stayed in touch by phone or email, or who have visited (I live alone – I'm allowed one visitor).

We will make it through this. By now, most of us should have had a first vaccination. Soon will come our second. Our hope is that soon we may be able to start some of our activities again. Certainly, Golf and Cycling will be able to meet. We're looking at maybe organizing picnics during the summer. Slowly, we will get back to normal, or as close to it as possible. Please let me know if you have any more suggestions for ways in which we can safely get together. Stay safe, and stay positive. Barbara

April 2021-04-16

Barbara Randle, President
barbrandle01@gmail.com

L'ARSE is a non-profit corporation whose sole mission is to foster friendship and mutual support amongst school board retirees. Eligible for membership are retired teachers, support staff and administrators. We are a registered not-for-profit corporation formed under Part III of the Companies Act (RSQ ch. C-38, section 218) holding letters patent under the registry/matricule # 1149265325.

The L'ARSE TRAVEL TALK GROUP

Other than during Covid restrictions, members of the Travel Talk Group meet twice a year, fall and spring, for lunch and a talk and slide presentation on an interesting trip taken by one of our L'ARSE members.

We usually meet in the upstairs room of the Duke and Divine Restaurant, Beaufort village, which is a comfortable and pleasant venue. Usually, ten to fifteen members usually join us for lunch before the presentation. Their lunches are good and reasonably priced. The restaurant also provides us with facilities to show the slide presentation.

We have had very interesting presentations on China, Arizona, Croatia, France, Italy, etc. Besides talking about their travel experiences, the presenters also give us practical hints and advice to help us if we want to visit these places. We encourage all L'ARSE members who have taken an interesting trip to share it at one of our meetings. Please let us know if you are interested by contacting:

Mickey Wernecke
 Daniel Abergel

hbwernecke@aol.com
 abergeld@yahoo.com

INTEREST GROUPS

3.

Book Club I

The Original Book Club



Thanks to the technical skills of Jan Farrell and Karen Zey, the Original Book Club has met on-line throughout the pandemic, reading a wide variety of books.

January's selection, *The Glass Hotel*, by Emily St. John Mandel, is set in the intersection of two seemingly disparate events: the collapse of a massive Ponzi scheme and the disappearance of a woman at sea. Of particular interest to us was the depiction of the way fraud works.

To lift our spirits in February, we read *Anxious People*, by Frederik Backman, (the author of *A Man Called Ove*). It's a charming novel about a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious people who find they have more in common than they could ever have imagined.

Michael Ondaatje's *Warlight*, our choice for March, is a shadowy story which intertwines the experiences of a fourteen-year-old boy with British intelligence operations after the Second World War. The first sentence sets the situation: "In 1945 our parents went away and left us in the care of two men who may have been criminals."

In April we discussed Ann Patchett's *The Dutch House*. At the end of the Second World War, a man makes a single canny investment to begin a real estate empire, propelling his family from poverty to enormous wealth. The first thing he does is buy a lavish estate meant as a surprise for his wife. Unfortunately, this house sets in motion the undoing of everyone he loves.

Consent, by Annabel Lyon, the award-winning author of *The Golden Mean*, is our book for May. This novel is centred on two sets of sisters whose lives become entwined when tragedy changes them forever.

Normally, our May meeting is the last one of the year, but we haven't yet decided when, or if, we'll stop for the summer. We do enjoy getting together on-line, but it's also nice to read whatever we choose, keeping an eye out for suggestions for next year. At our next meeting, we'll make our decision.

susansomerville8@sympatico.ca

Snowshoeing

This turned out to be a great winter for snowshoeing! This activity made its L'ARSE debut and attracted a small but enthusiastic group of participants, (four or five per outing). Facilities visited included Cap St. Jacques, Bois-de-L'Île-Bizard, Bois de Liesse and Fritz Farm. All of sites were in excellent condition. The trails were not as busy as those for cross-country skiing and social distancing was never a problem. We will definitely continue this group activity next winter. -- Bryden Murray, Group Coordinator

Cross Country Skiing

This past winter was challenging for cross country skiers. Mother Nature blessed us with warm temperatures but not a generous amount of snow. Two of the organizers, Colin Legault and Jim Kyle organized eight and five outings respectively. I spent my entire winter in the Laurentians, so I was unable to help organize. Unfortunately, very few skiers joined Colin or Jim, possibly due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Yes, a very challenging winter! Both Jim and Colin reported that many of the trails in Bois de Liesse were trampled down by an excessive number of walkers but the Morgan Arboretum and Cap St. Jacques offered well groomed trails. Pointe-Claire maintained a short 2 km trail on the Beaconsfield Golf course.

In the upcoming fall 2021 L'ARSE newsbulletin, people will be asked to indicate via email if they would like to join the group. We will invite skiers once a week to ski locally: Bois de Liesse, Cap St. Jacques, and the Morgan Arboretum. Our group welcomes new members of all skill levels, so please don't hesitate to join us.

I wish you a relaxing and healthy summer and hope to see you on the trails next winter.

-- Mary Anne Bindner

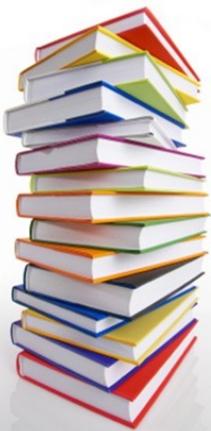
4. Book Club II

Book Club Two zoomed through the winter, thanks to Jan Murray, our Zoom Wizard.

The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd was our November choice. Kidd imagines the story of the brilliant and talented Ana, the fictional wife of Jesus, and her struggle to find her own voice and destiny.

In December we entered non-fiction territory with Caste by Isabel Wilkerson. She examines the unspoken caste system that shaped America and how our lives are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions.

This was followed by Emily St. John Mandel's The Glass Hotel, which was shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. It is a novel with ghosts, a five-star glass hotel and a massive Ponzi scheme. A recommended read for the twists and turns and unsavory yet fascinating characters.



If you have recently been the executor of a will and had to dispose of an old family home, you will relate to They Left Us Everything by Plum Johnson. This is a memoir of family, loss and a house full of memories.

In March we read How to Pronounce Knife by Souvankham Thammavongsa, the winner of the Scotiabank Giller Prize (we like these prize winners and nominees). It is a collection of short stories on the immigrant experience and characters struggling to find their way.

In April we continued our immigrant understandings with Vi by Kim Thuy, another on the Giller List. The Vietnam War destroys a family's fortunes and the book chronicles their journey from Saigon to Montreal and their successes in life.

These choices served us well through the long Covid months. Our upcoming May book is Historical Fiction. Set in Sweden in 1943, The Historians, by Cecilia Eckback, is a tale of murder and conspiracy in the middle of balancing neutrality with Nazi Germany. Any questions, dear readers? Contact lesleypasquin@gmail.com Keep well.

Craft Corner

Welcome to any new retirees who have creative hobbies and will finally have more time to enjoy them! Please feel free to ask Michèle for more info or suggestions.

Well, this crazy year has certainly provided some of us with lots of free time: Claudia is busy with communication between retiree groups but she still has knitted some beautiful lacy items, is trying a brioche style knit scarf as well as continuing to knit more and more... socks (her self-proclaimed addiction)! She has even created this pretty Ladybug Cake for her grand-daughter's birthday.

Brenda and her sewing machine have produced gorgeous traditional and "scrappy" quilts and throws in lovely colors and patterns.

And Michèle, our break-all-the-rules fabric printer and modern quilter, has all these textile projects going at once: leaves for a Tree of Life bee quilt reconstructed from various strip blocks, a second-hand Ikea bedsheet finally turned into a squares and stripes Blue/Green/Purple bed quilt (after a failed international hunt to find more vintage sheets to match), a cozy wool throw made from thrift store wool coats and blankets, a new flowery wreath design for printing on fabric and the final stages of the Dragonfly hand-printed challenge wall quilt. Also, a few other ideas are still percolating. Happy Spring of 2021 to all! Michèle at fitzgeraldmb@sympatico.ca

GOLF REPORT

THE season is nearly here, and after a winter without our indoor golf sessions, we are all eager to get out and play. For those who didn't touch a club all winter, did it feel like a foreign object when you picked it up for the first time this spring?

With courses beginning to open, we will be looking to start our season by the end of April. The 18-hole group plays every week with the 9-hole group hitting the course every second week.

A few times a year the two groups play at the same course. We play a variety of courses from the U.S. border to Eastern Ontario and everywhere in between. In August the School's Open Open is played on the first day students return to class. This is our salute to being retired.

Our group consists of over 60 female and male golfers. We have a core group of diehards that are there almost every week and some that drop in a few times a year. The skill level is quite varied. It ranges from "Ho hum, another birdie" to "I didn't believe I could count that high". It is a lot of fun when the weather cooperates.

Please send us an email if you would like to join our group.

Bryden Murray at bryden.murray@sympatico.ca or Mike Kirk at mcqkirk@gmail.com .



6.

Bridge, canasta and samba



Bridge -- I have been playing bridge online (www.bridgebase.com) during the pandemic but I miss our Bridge Club. Bridge is a social game. Although there are rules and conventions to learn, the real fun is figuring out what your partner and the other players have in their hands and what cards they are going to play next.

The L'ARSE Bridge Club gets together every second Wednesday afternoon at the home of Lorraine Pawlusiak, former Thorndale teacher and card shark extraordinaire. I think it is Lorraine's gracious hospitality and willingness to teach others a game she loves that makes it possible for players of all abilities to have a good afternoon playing cards together.

There is lots of lively conversation and banter to accompany the making of contracts in minor, major or no-trump suits. I am looking forward to getting together with everyone, and maybe even some new faces, again. — Louise Chalmers

Samba and Canasta -- This activity has attracted many loyal participants since its beginning several years ago. Many have been newcomers to samba and canasta and have come to enjoy them fully. The basics of these games are quite simple but luck and strategy are what make them fun.

The players of the L'ARSE Samba and Canasta group have found this to be a very long year without the opportunity to play their favourite game! We look forward to meeting once again at the card table, as soon as we can.

Cyclopaths

Warm early spring weather enabled our cycling group (called Cyclopaths) to get an early start on a cycling year that usually spans three seasons. We got underway March 30th with a trip from Beaconsfield to the locks at Ste. Anne de Bellevue for lunch then along Anciens Combattants, over the 40 returning via Chemin Ste. Marie, crossing the 40 again & back home.

Our second trip began for most participants at the Lachine 53rd Ave. entrance to the bike path into the Atwater Market area and back.

Our third trip was led by Janice Tessier & Bryden Murray who have responded to my willingness (expressed over the previous 15 years) to share responsibility for organizing group trips. Jan & Bryden will likely coordinate the 2nd Tuesday of every month. We left from Pointe des Cascades and followed the bike path paralleling the Soulanges Canal to Les Coteaux. We ate lunch at our usual riverside park in small groups appropriately distanced from one another according to Covid guidelines and wearing masks when not eating or drinking according to the Covid guidelines of the time. This latter requirement has fluctuated and has been removed at the time of writing (April 18th). A little less than half of the participants followed the river road for the return journey while the remainder retraced the bike path along the canal.

In the last edition of LarsEncore, I spoke of the advantages electric pedal-assist bicycles. Our complement of electric pedal-assist bike riders has increased lately as some members have purchased their electric bikes in response to ads seen in the weekly local community journals. This new LaSalle warehouse has sufficient room that allows for test rides indoors.

While some group members may be awaiting a reduction of Covid limitations, most of us have found that cycling is an activity in which physical distancing is easy to maintain. Another bonus is the therapeutic effect of resuming social interaction with others. Newly-retired educators, wishing further information, can contact me: — Wayne Clifford 514-697-8802 or Cyclopaths1998@gmail.com