



# AFGS

*American-French Genealogical Society  
Woonsocket, RI*



Volume: XX

No. 6

1

## **NEWS FROM 78 EARLE STREET**

**Norm Deragon**

**Building Committee Chair**

The first major public event held at the Society since the building was purchased nearly two years ago was a resounding success. The 2009 AFGS French Canadian Hall of Fame induction ceremony was conducted in the first floor auditorium on October 16th. More than 200 persons attended the ceremony, which was preceded by a wine and cheese reception. The feedback we received from many of the attendees was that they were favorably impressed with our building and look forward to attending future events at our Franco-American Heritage Center.



Signage has been installed on the building that makes it much more visible to visitors approaching from Social Street, one of the main thoroughfares in Woonsocket. The Society's name is spelled out along the top of the building and on the left side is the AFGS logo and below it the words, Franco-American Heritage Center. Soon, we will add another sign designating AFGS as part of the Blackstone Valley Heritage Corridor's Footsteps in History Tour. People will be directed to our Library during various Corridor tours and we will be able to help them search for their family roots. This is a very exciting designation and we are pleased to be included with so many other fine organizations.



As we head into the winter months and the holiday season, the focus will be on completing projects that were begun earlier this year. The lower level hallway will be repainted and the first floor hallway will also be repainted.

The former first floor Pastor's Study will be renamed in honor of the later Sister Eugena Poulin, RSM. Sister Eugena was an AFGS member who wrote numerous articles for *Je Me Souviens*, and whose family trust fund provided for the purchase of books and other resources for the library. She was a member of the Class of 2004, AFGS French Canadian Hall of Fame. The room will be renovated over the next few weeks and renamed the Poulin Study. A dedication ceremony is scheduled for December 6th.

A more effective heating unit will be installed in the lower level lunchroom in time for the colder weather. The unit should be in operation by mid-November.

Projects being considered for 2010 include more efficient climate control for the library that would provide air conditioning during the summer months in both wings and a more efficient heating system in the new wing. We also will further investigate options for providing access to the building to all who visit us.

### **WHAT'S COOKING BY JANICE BURKHART TWO HOLIDAY SPECIALS**

Here are two recipes for your holiday enjoyment. One is a scrumptious dessert sent in by Fran Tivey. The other is a delicious, low calorie cranberry sauce for those who need to watch their sugar intake.

#### **FRENCH SILK CHOCOLATE PIE**

Cook a deep dish 9" pie shell Cream together: 1 1/2 Cups of butter and 2 1/4 Cups of sugar  
Blend in: 6 squares [2 oz] each unsweetened chocolate - melted and 2 teaspoons of vanilla

With an electric mixer add 6 eggs **one egg at a time beating 3 minutes each**. When finished, make sure there are no sugar granules in the filling. If there are, beat a little longer. Filling will get lighter in color as you add the eggs. Pour into pie shell and refrigerate. You can make this pie a day or two ahead of time. It keeps nicely in the refrigerator. Before serving, top with whipped cream and shaved chocolate. Make the slices small as this is very rich! **ENJOY!!!**

## CRANBERRY SAUCE

1 10 ounce package fresh or frozen cranberries 1/2 Cup water 1 teaspoon cornstarch 1/3 Cup Splenda granules  
zest of 1 orange

Wash cranberries thoroughly, and remove any bad berries and stems. Combine water, corn starch and Splenda in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Add cranberries and orange zest. Simmer on low for 10 minutes until cranberries split and mixture begins to thicken. (When time is up, if you like smooth cranberry sauce, blend mixture with a hand blender until smooth. If you like firm sauce, add a small package of sugar free orange or cranberry Jell-o. Mix well.) Cover mixture and let cool. Store in the refrigerator. I even like this spread on toast!

### **AFGS TO PARTICIPATE IN RHODE ISLAND BROADCASTERS' CANCELLATION NETWORK**

A second reminder - once again this coming winter season, AFGS will participate in the television and radio winter storm cancellation system sponsored by the Rhode Island Broadcasters' Association. So, whenever inclement weather or any other emergency situation, forces the Society to close the library, a notice will be broadcast by the six Rhode Island television stations and 21 Rhode Island radio stations. Many of the stations provide coverage into nearby Massachusetts and Connecticut. The cancellation notice also will be posted on the AFGS Web site, [www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org). If you are a regular visitor to the library, you may send your e-mail address to Jan Burkhart, [misskoko@aol.com](mailto:misskoko@aol.com), and we will do our best to notify you by e-mail if the library will be closed.

### **A TIP FROM YOUR "BOOKIE"**

**BY JANICE BURKHART**

A. F. G. S. has started to collect city street directories. These books are very handy when you are doing genealogy. You can find the street and number where your family lived. By using consecutive years you can tell when a person moved. Sometimes they indicate when a person died and also their occupation. You can sometimes located relatives living in the same city. These are good books to peruse.

Our library also has a number of books which recount French-Canadian folklore. These interesting stories are part of our heritage and are fun to pass on to the younger generation.

**HISTOR** is an interesting set of books. These books are composed of cards that were used when PRDH was being written by Rene Jette. You can find information about individuals not contained in the regular repertoires.

Also, don't forget to check out our many periodicals. They are filled with interesting, informative articles. We exchange with 128 other Societies so there is a lot to choose from. Most of the Canadian journals are written in French but the American journals are in English. You might find research completed on one of your ancestors, interesting historical articles and even informative "how to" articles. This is an underused treasure chest of wonderful information. Give it a try.

### **TIPS FROM OUR WEB GUY**

**BY BILL POMMENVILLE**

E-Mail Addresses

We are often asked why we want your e-mail address. Here is our e-mail policy. "The American-French Genealogical Society maintains a database of member e-mail addresses. This database is used solely for the purpose of communicating with members. The American-French Genealogical Society **does not give, lend or sell member e-mail addresses for any purpose.**

## Page 4

Also, please keep an eye on our web site as an exciting historical picture album will soon be in place.



**Web Guy Bill Pommenville helps a new member explore the computer programs available at the library.**

### **DNA WORKSHOP REMINDER**

On Saturday, November 21, Thomas Allaire will give a class on the benefits of using DNA in your genealogy. He will talk about what DNA can tell us about ancestry and kinships, the different kinds of tests and their uses, and the meaning of the results. He will also discuss how deep ancestry for the paternal/maternal lines can be established. He will discuss how this information is kept and disseminated, and the opportunities it affords to contact kin. Come if you can!

### **WEB SITES YOU MIGHT ENJOY**

Here are two interesting web sites which you might enjoy.

The first is a very interesting site with short videos about Quebec history. The site is in French but you can click to have the text displayed. Then you can copy the text and use one of the computer translation programs to translate it for you. The subjects are interesting and varied. They are very short and will not take long to view. Just a peek at the past. <http://www.balado.tv/collection.php>

If you like cookie recipes, try this site sent in by a member. Not only does it have dozens of recipes but there you will also find fun for the kids or grandchildren. Great fun. Thanks to Barbara Smith. <http://www.northpole.com/Kitchen/Cookbook/rec0438.html>

### **STILL TIME TO RETURN YOUR TICKETS!**

Once again AFGS is having its annual Holiday Drawing. This drawing has proven to be very popular with our members. Since we only print 10,000 tickets, your chances for winning are very good. The proceeds go to the AFGS Building Fund so it is a win-win situation for our members. There is still time to return your tickets. **Again, first prize is \$1000; second prize is \$500, third prize is \$250, and fourth prize is \$250.** Good luck to everyone who chooses to participate.

### **WINTER ADDRESSES**

Please remember to send us your winter address if you will be away for a few months this winter. Otherwise you will miss out on your newsletters and Je Me Souviens. Your dues have paid for them so please help us to find you. Thanks to those members who have already sent in their seasonal addresses.

## DUES ARE OVERDUE

A reminder that membership runs from October 1 to September 30. If you have not sent in your dues, please do so. If you are not renewing could you please let us know and also the reason? That would be very helpful.



**Maggie Pommenville, Co-Membership Chair, will be happy to answer your membership questions.**

## FAMILY ASSOCIATIONS

Larry Bergeron has sent the following site for Bergeron-D'Ambise family information. Visit the web site at: <http://www.bergeron-damboise.com/en/>



Members of the Bergeron family gather for a reunion.

The Guindon Newsletter started in 1992 when it was sent by mail to a number of Guindon connections. Now the Guindon Newsletter is published electronically twice a year - spring and fall. The primary focus is the descendants of Francois Guedon & Marie Molay's son Pierre Guindon, born 24 Sep 1662, St. Pierre du Marche, Ville du Loudun, Poitou, France. Pierre married Catharine Barsa 21 Nov 1706 at the Notre Dame Church in Montreal, Quebec. When the families started to migrate out of Quebec to Ontario and the bordering States, Vermont, New York, Michigan etc., in the 1800's the name was anglicized to various spellings using "Y" such as Yaddow, Yandau, Yando, Yondau. To receive a complimentary electronic Guindon Newsletter please contact: Laverne Aitchison : [lk.aitch@gmail.com](mailto:lk.aitch@gmail.com)

Remember, if you have a family association you would like us to know about, send the information to [misskoko@aol.com](mailto:misskoko@aol.com).

**HISTORY CORNER  
BY ROY FORGIT**

**"Peasant, Lord, and Merchant, Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840"** by Allan Greer  
University of Toronto Press, 1985

In his preface, the author notes a lack of studies of Quebec colonial society in the late 18th and the first one third of the 19th Century. He chooses as his study locale three parishes of the Richelieu River Valley: Sorel, St. Ours and St. Denis. His interest is in this pre-capitalist or traditional period, and centers on the "habitants" who were the majority of the French-Canadian population at the time.

He notes that the topic is not new, but that these people had long been treated superficially in texts. They were characterized as sturdy, polite, and brave, but docile and independent. These portraits are by their own people: the governors, Intendants, and bishops. Notably, all were upper-class observers with a motive of social control, and viewed the peasantry (whether in Europe or Canada ) as a resource. They had a medieval or feudal attitude of class systems.

But our author wanted a view "from below", that of the rural masses themselves. He refers to a study by Louise Dechene of 17th Century Montreal. She concludes with an emphasis on the duality in the regions' economy and society, "habitant and marchand" (merchant) who lived without close social contacts.

As part of a plan to protect and expand this colony on the foundation set down by the fur traders, Louis XIV sent the Carignan Regiment in 1665. Its mission was to defend against the Iroquois. Forts were located in the Richelieu River Valley, the traditional route of the invaders from the south. In 1666 the first solid victory there brought an end to the threat of annihilation, but raids continued for another half century.

Seventy miles northeast of Montreal, at the mouth of the Richelieu River , the town of Sorel (Saurel ) grew up around a fort established by Captain Pierre de Saurel's company of the Carignan Regiment in 1665. It was an historic site even earlier, as fur trading fairs on the island of St. Ignace had been held between Indians and Europeans in the early 17th century. Champlain had explored it in 1609 and a French fort had been set up in 1642 at Sorel, but abandoned.

A fellow captain, Pierre de St. Ours, would establish a settlement at a site 12 kilometers up the river. As free land was offered, settlers soon arrived at Sorel and St. Ours. While the soil was sandy and poor, the offshore islands were rich in fish and wild fowl. Between 1681 and 1724 the number of farms in Sorel rose rapidly, The source of population growth was not immigration, however, but high fertility rates. Farming was the main activity of the habitants on the south shore. In 1720 rents specified measures of wheat to be paid to the seigneurs. But as farm sizes averaged 15 to 19 arpents most settlers achieved self-sufficiency.

By 1722 Sorel and St. Ours were organized as parishes rather than seigneuries, although the boundaries were those of old. Soon a church and rectory were the most prominent local landmarks, rather than the mansion of the seigneur. Village life became centered on the peasants' households. (The author uses peasant rather than habitant in his text.)

By the 1765 census, there were two parish priests in the Richelieu River area but neither held any land. The seigneurs themselves held domains not much larger than a habitants farm. Of the farms at Sorel 67% were 40 to 99 arpents, while at St. Ours it was 76%, and 48% at St. Denis. Very few farmers held less than 60 or more than 250 arpents. This was enough to live on, but not dominate others. 74.6% of households held a married couple (children were not counted in this census), 6.9% held a man but no woman (a widower), another 6.9% held two men and one woman, usually a grown son who worked as a farmhand.

## Page 7

Work was primarily a family affair. Wage labor was not common and fairly unimportant to their economy. The custom of "vaine pature," or allowing animals to roam free to all fields, was limited to the Montreal area. In the lower Richelieu Valley enclosure was the rule.

An example is used of the household of Theophile Allaire in St. Ours, on the Ile d'Orleans in the mid-18th century. Born in 1722 at St. Francois, he was the 12th of 15 children. His family moved west due to overcrowding and settled in St. Ours when he was 3 years of age. The youngest of five boys who grew to manhood he did not marry until age 31, not having the advantages given his older brothers. He first married in 1753 losing his wife, Amable Menard after 6 years. In 1761 he remarried to Felicite Audet, but he himself died in 1767.

Inventories required by law gave the author a chance to view two listings of notarized documents on the material basis of one habitant household. The land was 2 linear arpents on the river, but westward 15 times that, yielding a long thin strip, 100 paces across but one mile deep ! Thus it held 60 arpents of area. The road ran along the back lot-line of the houses, creating close neighbors. The St. Lawrence River was their main route of transportation.

His neighbor was Nicholas Thibeault, who witnessed his marriage contract and later married his sister. Half of Theophile's farm was still forest, some 33 arpents in 1762. It was a source of firewood, fencing, and building materials. Sometimes, if the trees were maples, a source of sugar.

Two sons were born to them after 1762, their first male children. He may have had them in mind when he bought more land. Five arpents were used as a meadow, producing hay for winter, while twenty arpents grew wheat for bread. Crude plows were pulled by oxen or horses. In Sorel the sandy soil was lighter, not needing oxen. These animals provided meat and hides, although for most of the year they consumed vast amounts of fodder with no return! Thus horses came to be preferred, as they were better for transportation, being faster and more intelligent.

Most homesteads had a small carriage and a sleigh for winter for human transport. But on an island like Sorel, a canoe replaced the carriage for many families. Absent also from these inventories, were saddles.

Kitchen gardens were important, and were the wives' job. Squash, onions, cabbage, and tobacco were staples. Women smoked as well as their husbands. Summer work for the men was fencing, whitewashing of buildings, and general home repairs. A critical chore was the digging and maintenance of drainage ditches. Scythe sharpening was also done to be prepared for the harvest time.

The feudal custom of seigneurial dues, payable annually in money, produce, or labor, was an added burden on the habitants. Research shows that such rents rose steadily during the French Regime in Canada.

A postscript : This is a pedantic work, like a textbook, which is not surprising as the author was a history professor !

### **PRODUCT WANTED**

A. F. G. S. member David Gregoire writes: I was wondering if you, or possibly others at the Society, know of a local source for Grenache Caramel. I grew up with it as a breakfast spread, and over the years have brought some home from Canada from time to time. This summer, I never made it to Quebec, and it occurred to me that members may know where it can be bought closer to home. Thank you in advance for any help you can provide.

## QUESTION

What is a “scieur de long?” This question was asked in a recent Quebec Digest. Answer given: A direct translation I think relates to a sawyer of long boards or logs possibly using a frame with a sawyer on top and under the log being cut.

### QUEBEC VITAL RECORDS

If you go to <http://simmons.b2b2c.ca/attach1.htm> and then click on Quebec Vital Records, you will be able to read a very interesting article about how these records are stored.

### RANDOM ACTS OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS

Here is a really neat site where you can go if you are stuck and have hit a wall. These very nice people will try to help you at no cost. It would be nice if we could return the favor! <http://www.raogk.org/quebec.htm>

### AFGS ACQUIRES HISTORICAL RECORDS FROM LeFOYER

The Board of directors of LeFoyer, a French Canadian social organization headquartered in Pawtucket, RI, has approved making AFGS the repository of its records, which date back to 1937. The collection includes photos and other memorabilia which chronicle the storied history of LeFoyer. In its heyday, LeFoyer had a membership that numbered in the thousands. The collection has been moved to AFGS and will be catalogued with the assistance from LeFoyer members. The collection will be housed in the Poulin Study.

### GENEALOGY CLASS WELL ATTENDED



**Jan Burkhart leads the most recent free genealogy class offering at the library.**

Our recent free genealogy class on the issues of how to use the library and how to read the repertoires (collections of vital statistics) was very well attended. The attendees and their guests received handouts and had

## Page 9

time to ask questions. There are many more classes on the agenda. Please check the list you received or check out the list on our web site [www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org). There is sure to be something of interest there for you!

### GENTLE THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Birds of a feather flock together and crap on your car.

A penny saved is a government oversight.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat have gotten to be really good friends.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement .

He who hesitates is probably right.

Did you ever notice: The Roman Numerals for forty (40) are "XL."

If you think there is good in everybody, you haven't met everybody.

If you can smile when things go wrong , you have someone in mind to blame.

There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it. For example I am sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt .

Did you ever notice: When you put the 2 words "The" and "IRS" together it spells "Theirs."

Aging: Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young. Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

First you forget names, then you forget faces. Then you forget to pull up your zipper. It's worse when you forget to pull it down.

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf

### JOYEUX NOEL ET BONNE ET HEUREUSE ANNEE

The AFGS Officers and Board of Directors wish everyone a very happy and peaceful holiday season. Relax and enjoy the holidays with your friends and family members because when all is said and done, the love of your family and fellowship of your friends are priceless.

**AFGS BUILDING CHRISTMAS WISH LIST**

Last year the building committee compiled a list of items needed for the maintenance of our building. The Building Christmas Wish List included cleaning supplies and other items useful in maintaining the building over the course of the year. As always, our members were very generous and we were able to purchase a significant number of items that helped maintain the building throughout 2009. We have compiled a similar list to assist us in the coming year. The items are listed below. If you would like to contribute one of the items to the building, either send a donation earmarked for a particular item, or send the item to AFGS in care of the Building Wish List, PO Box 830, Woonsocket, RI 02895. Please do not send items to the building address, since there is not always someone on site to receive the mail.

**AFGS BUILDING HOLIDAY WISH LIST**

- Paper Towels**
  - Bathroom Tissue**
  - Kleenex**
  - Window cleaner**
  - Pine Sol (or other disinfectant cleaner)**
  - Murphy's Oil Soap**
  - Dish Cloths**
  - Dust Cloths**
  - Dishwashing detergents**
  - Trash Bags (33 gals)**
  - Hand Soap (antibacterial)**
  - Ajax (scouring powder)**
  - Office supply store gift cards**
  - Home improvement store gift card (Home Depot or Lowe's)**
  - Ground Coffee (regular and decaf)**
  - Tea Bags**
  - Paper Plates**
  - Paper Napkins**
  - Sugar packets**
  - Non-Sugar sweetener (Equal, Sweet N Lo, etc)**
  - Bottled Water Service (Poland Spring, etc)**
  - Sand and salt (deice for walkways)**
  - Snow removal service**
  - Gift card to be used for snow removal, yard care, tree service**
  - 10' or 12' step ladder**
  - Coffee cups (8 oz)**
  - Hard candy**
  - Canned Soda (12 oz cans) (CocaCola products)**
  - One month's janitorial service (\$155.00)**
  - Dish Cloths**
  - dish drain board**
  - dish drying rack**
- Thank you for any help you are able to provide.**