IN MEMORIAM
Jacques Staelen (1925-2009)

Jacques-E. Staelen, who died in August at the age of 84, wore many hats while living a full life as a Woonsocket manufacturer, family man, and civic promoter. But it was Staelen’s ties to his native France and the work he did to keep local Franco-American connections active that made his name familiar to area residents. One need only visit the Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket to see the work Staelen did to uncover the history of Woonsocket’s Franco-American ties during two world wars. The story is told through the Museum’s display of the Merci boxcar, which brought French troops to battle during World War I before being laden with gifts to thank the American people for helping liberate France after World War II. Among his many other accomplishments, Staelen served as president of the Club Richelieu International, an organization promoting francophone culture throughout the world, and as president of the French Institute advisory council. He also received honors from France and Quebec including being named chevalier of the prestigious French Order of Merit and Legion of Honor. In addition to his role running the family’s manufacturing operation in Woonsocket, Staelen was an accomplished pen-and-ink artist. Adieu, cher Jacques, et merci du fond du cœur !

UPCOMING EVENTS
QUINZAINE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE
March 14-28, 2010

In March 2010, the French Institute will continue its annual tradition of welcoming a visiting author from Quebec in celebration of the Semaine internationale de la Francophonie. For details, please contact us or check the Assumption College website at http://www.assumption.edu as the date approaches. French Institute members will receive invitations in the mail.

CONCERT OF FRENCH AND CANADIAN MUSIC
Sunday, March 7, 2010, 2:00 PM
Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Assumption College

The Salisbury Singers, under the direction of Dr. Michelle Graveline, will perform the Durufle Requiem with instrumental ensemble and the Worcester Children’s Chorus. They will also present several short works by Canadian composers. Tickets are $20, $18 for seniors and students, $10 for children under 12. Venez nombreux !

CONFERENCE ON FRENCH CATHOLICISM
"Reintegrating Man: The Influence of French Catholicism on American Thought"
April 9-10, 2010, Assumption College

This conference in honor of the bicentennial of the birth of Father Emmanuel d’Azon, founder of the Augustinians of the Assumption, will address two waves of French Catholic thought. The group of thinkers from Péguy and Mauriac to Marcel and Mantain needs to be revisited for its influence, actual and potential, on American philosophy and literature. Flannery O’Connor acknowledged Mantain, Bermanos, and Mauriac as her mentors; Allen Tate, Caroline Gordon, Walker Percy, and many others found their inspiration in the French. The second wave, represented at the conference by Philippe Bévilénot, is made up of Catholic thinkers such as Pierre Manent. In both, the central concern is a restoration of man to his whole dignity and his rightful place.

IN MEMORIAM
Robert Bolduc (1913-2009)

Dr. Robert A. Bolduc of Worcester, a retired surgeon, passed away in November 2009. He was a major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, serving in the South Pacific in World War II. Among his many other accomplishments, Bolduc practiced medicine at Worcester Hahnemann Hospital and Worcester State Hospital. Baptized in St. Eustache in Quebec City, he was a longtime member of Holy Family Parish, and a proud member of the Joseph Church, he was a longtime member of  the Semaine internationale de la Francophonie. For details, please contact us or check the Assumption College website at http://www.assumption.edu as the date approaches. French Institute members will receive invitations in the mail.

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SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES


Dr. Choquette’s other national and international activities included continuing service on the editorial boards of the scholarly journals French Colonial History and Québec Studies and on the Comité scientifique de l’Encyclopédie du patrimoine culturel de l’Amérique française (see http://www.encyclopediepatrimoine.ca). She also served on the executive boards of the American Council for Québec Studies (ACQS) and the French Colonial Historical Society (FCHS) and was a member of the Committee for the Alfred Heggy Book Prize, a prize awarded annually by the French Colonial Historical Society for the best book in French colonial history.

JOBIN COLLECTION

Leslie Choquette introduced an audience of French and Canadian scholars to the riches of the French Institute’s Jobin Family Archive at the most recent conference of the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française (CIRCF) of the University of Ottawa. The conference, on the theme of immigrant correspondence, was entitled "Lettres de la francophonie nord-américaine." Dr. Choquette’s paper, "Un fonds familial franco-américain: la correspondance des Jobin," discussed the letters exchanged by four generations of this fascinating family that immigrated to Boston from Québec City in 1890.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR


LA SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE

La Société Historique Franco-Américaine, one of the oldest Franco-American organizations in New England, recently resumed its activities after a period of quiescence. It announced its new officers and board of directors, elected during an annual meeting held at Assumption College in February 2009. Officers are Dr. Roger Lazerette de Lowell (president), Marcel Raymond of Worcester (vice-president), Gertrude Lamoureux of Woonsocket (secretary), and Donald Chupat of Manchester, New Hampshire (treasurer). Board members are Dr. Armand Chartier, Dr. Richard Deslauriers, Dr. Ronald Héroux, Dr. Georges-André Lussier, Albert Marceau, Louis-Charles Martel, D.-Michel Michaud, Paul Papineau, and Benoit Pelletier Shoja, all longtime friends of the French Institute.

La Société Historique Franco-Américaine, formed at the Parker House in Boston on September 4, 1899, fosters the clear and deliberate study of United States history with particular emphasis on French and French-Canadian contributions to the development and evolution of the American people and their culture. The Société has recently expanded its mandate and undertaken the digitization of its archives collection. To consult its materials on the internet, type "La Société Historique Franco-Américaine" into your search engine, and you will access the full series of digitized Bulletins beginning with that of 1905. Plans to digitize additional publications as well as unpublished archival materials are underway.

The Société will celebrate its 110th anniversary this coming spring, most likely during the Quinzaine de la Francophonie en Nouvelle-Angleterre, from March 14-18, 2010.

Membership in the Société is open to all. Members receive an annual Bulletin and are invited to attend and participate in biannual assemblies and special conferences. They are also encouraged to submit historical texts for inclusion in the Société’s annual Bulletin. To become a member or for more information, contact President Roger Lazerette at (903) 669-3786 or at roger.lazerette@yahoo.com.

FRENCH INSTITUTE CATALOGUING PROJECT

Since Spring 2008, catalogue Nina Tsantis has been working to make the French Institute book collection available to the public through OCLC (Online Computer Library Center)—The World’s Libraries Connected. During academic year 2008-2009, Nina catalogued over 1500 monographic items, mostly in French, donated by French Institute supporters Armand Chartier, Gerard Brault, Wilfrid Michaud, Paul Chassé, Rev. Philippe Thibodeau, and others. This work increased the size of our catalogued collection by over 57%.

Making this book collection available to users through our online catalogue ensures that Assumption College’s French Institute will be recognized as the premier center in the United States for research on the French presence in North America. As importantly, recognition guarantees that our collection will continue to grow as new donors turn to us to preserve their heritage.

MERCI POUR TOUL, NINA!

DONATION OF DUPLICATE BOOKS

In the past year, as part of our cataloguing project, the French Institute has been able to send off hundreds of duplicate items to Brown University, Yale University, the University of Southern Maine, Fairfield University, the State University of New York College at Plattsburgh, and other area libraries to defray the cost of postage. These valuable books might otherwise have ended up in recycling. Brown University kindly acknowledges our donations on its website. See http://iosiah.brown.edu/search-S7/m7?

SEARCH=bookplateAssumptionHARRIS

ORGANIZATION OF ARCHIVES

In addition to her cataloguing duties, Nina Tsantis has been working to improve the organization and preservation of unpublished archival materials donated to the French Institute such as the Jobin Collection. Please stay tuned!