IN MEMORIAM

Richard L. Belair (1934-2010)

Richard "Rick" Belair, a Franco-American author, passed away in Auburn, Massachusetts on November 10, 2010. Mr. Belair was born in Central Falls, Rhode Island and attended Assumption College, Worcester State College, and the University of Connecticut at Storrs. A United States Army veteran, he taught English and creative writing for many years at Auburn High School and Quinsigamond Community College.

In 1991, Mr. Belair published The Fathers, a historical novel about the struggles of a Franco-American family in a New England mill town roiled by religious and ethnic controversy during the 1920s.

Mr. Belair was a loyal supporter of the French Institute and contributed his thoughts "On Writing a Novel about Franco-Americans" to Claire Quintal’s book La Littérature franco-américaine : écrivains et écritures (1992). Adieu, cher Rick, et merci du fond du cœur !

IN MEMORIAM

Richard J. DesLauriers (1929-2010)

Dr. Richard J. DesLauriers died in Longmeadow, Massachusetts on November 22, 2010. Born in Springfield, Massachusetts, he was a graduate of Assumption Prep, Assumption College, and Tufts School of Dental Medicine. Following dental school, he served in the United States Army as a captain.

An avid mountain hiker, Dr. DesLauriers walked nearly the entire length of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela through France into Spain and a Mass in French in honor of departed members of the society at St. Joseph Shrine. It continued with a convivial meal followed by a lecture on "Jack Kérouac, Franco-Américain—sa religion catholique, sa langue française, son identité franco-américaine" by local Kérouac expert Roger Brunelle and a walking tour of downtown Lowell as it would have looked to Kerouac in the 1940s and 1950s.

LA VIE FRANCO-AMÉRICAINE

On August 17, 2010 the director of the French Institute visited the Geisel Library at Saint Anselm College to celebrate the dedication of the ACA Lambert Franco-American Collection, a sister collection to our own. The collection, which holds over 3,000 monographs and periodicals, was originally assembled by Adélaïde Lambert, a self-taught merchant from Manchester, New Hampshire who dedicated himself to saving the unwanted books of local Franco-Americans. In 1918 the Collection Lambert was purchased by the Association Canado-Américaine, and it continued to grow thanks to generous donors including Mgr. Adrien Verrette. It was sold to the ACA Library Preservation Consortium, LLC in 2008 and donated to Saint Anselm College. Félicitations à nos collègues !

That same evening Nina Tsantinis represented the French Institute at Woonsocket’s Museum of Work and Culture, where Brendan Shanahan lectured on "French-Canadian Departures and New England Destinations in the Age of Industrialization" based on his research in our collection.

On November 20, 2010 La Société historique franco-américaine celebrated the 110th anniversary of its founding in Lowell, Massachusetts. The celebration began with a ceremony at the grave of its founder, and first president, lawyer J.-Henri Guillot, and a Mass in French in honor of departed members of the society at St. Joseph Shrine. It continued with a convivial meal followed by a lecture on "Jack Kérouac, Franco-Américain—sa religion catholique, sa langue française, son identité franco-américaine" by local Kérouac expert Roger Brunelle and a walking tour of downtown Lowell as it would have looked to Kérouac in the 1940s and 1950s.

SEMAINE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE EN NOUVELLE-ANGLETERRE

In March 2010, the French Institute once again participated in events surrounding the New England celebration of the Semaine internationale de la Francophonie. The celebration included two events at Assumption College organized by the French Institute in collaboration with the Centre de la Francophonie des Américains in Québec and the Québec Government Office in Boston.

HIP-HOP AVEC WEBSTER

On March 17, thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Centre de la Francophonie des Américains, the French Institute presented "Hip-Hop avec Webster," a workshop for Assumption students by the noted Québec rap artist and historian. Webster taught a large and enthusiastic group to write rap lyrics IN FRENCH including choosing the right words and literary tools such as images, metaphors, rhyme, and rhythm. Merci pour tout Web !

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**SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES**

The director of the French Institute, Leslie Choquette, once again participated in several international conferences in the past year. In addition to lecturing on Champlain in New York, she introduced audiences to the riches of the French Institute’s JOBIN Family Archive at both the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française of the University of Ottawa and the annual meeting of the Association francophone pour le savoir in Montreal. She discussed Wilfrid Beaulieu, the editor of Worcester’s Le Travailleu, at the biennial meeting of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, and Under Canadian Skies, a Franco-American novel by Joseph P. Choquette, at that of the American Council for Québec Studies. She also chaired a panel at the annual meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society in Paris, began collaborating with the French research group Correspondances des Amériques, and taught in the First Summer Academy of Atlantic History, an intensive seminar for graduate students, in Bayreuth, Germany.

Dr. Choquette’s other national and international activities included lectures for the French–Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay Community College, service on the editorial boards of the scholarly journals French Colonial History, Québec Studies, and Recerches sociographiques, membership in the Comité scientifique of the Encyclopédie du patrimoine culturel de l’Amérique française, and chairing the Committee for the Alfred Heggy Book Prize, a prize awarded annually for the best book in French colonial history. Last but not least, she was the recipient of the Paul Ziegler Presidential Award for Excellence in Scholarship at Assumption College in September 2010.

**FRENCH INSTITUTE CATALOGUING PROJECT**

Since Spring 2008, cataloguer Nina Tsantinis has been working fulltime to make the French Institute book collection available to the public through OCLC (Online Computer Library Center)—The World’s Libraries Connected. To date, Nina has catalogued over 5,300 monographic items, mostly in French, donated by French Institute supporters Gerard Braut, Armand Chartier, Paul Chassé, Arthur Eno, Ernest Guillet, Wilfrid Michaud, Rev. Philippe Thibodeau, and others. This work has increased the size of our catalogued collection by a factor of five!

Nina’s recent cataloguing endeavors include processing some seventy-five rare books from the personal collection of Louis Jobin, which the French Institute received from Rev. Philippe Thibodeau as part of the Jobin Family Archive. Most of these books, dealing with various aspects of the French presence in North America, date from the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Making our book holdings 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. Just as importantly, recognition guarantees that our collection will continue to grow as new donors turn to us to preserve their heritage. Merci pour tout, Nina!

**NEW CIRCULATION POLICY FOR FRENCH INSTITUTE MATERIALS**

After experimenting for several years with a strict non-circulation policy for French Institute materials, we have decided, in consultation with Library colleagues, to return to a policy of limited circulation. Due to significant inter-library loan demand for our unique collection, non-rare items that are in good condition will once again be allowed to circulate with the director’s permission. We trust that this change will allow our collection to reach a wider audience without compromising our goal of preserving the records of the history and cultural traditions of Francophones on this continent.

**PARISH HISTORIES DATA BASE**

As part of her cataloguing duties, Nina Tsantinis has assembled a searchable data base of more than 250 rare parish histories held by the French Institute. Many of these histories concern the “national” parishes founded by French Canadian immigrants in New England in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.