



Gabrielle's World

Maison Gabrielle-Roy's Newsletter



Get updates on activities at Maison Gabrielle-Roy on our website (www.maisongabrielleroy.mb.ca) as well as Facebook.

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TIME TO DREAM AND WRITE

Summer is for me a particularly fruitful creative season. As I am a teacher, I am fortunate in having a two-month holiday that allows me to devote a good part of the day to dreaming, to drawing, to painting and, above all, to writing. That is what I did this summer when I was in Montreal, in the Laurentians, in Quebec City, and in Kamouraska; and also here, on the banks of the Red River and the La Salle. I was able to commit my creative hours to writing the poetry I told you about in the last newsletter. The work is now in the hands of a publisher and I am waiting to hear whether the committee of readers is pleased with it. *Alea jacta est* (the die is cast) as

**BERTRAND NAYET,
WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE
AT MAISON GABRIELLE-ROY**

Julius Caesar said as he crossed the Rubicon; goodness, yet another river with red in its name!

Speaking of publishing, the Éditions du Blé had a project called BREFS! for which they planned to collect 150 very short stories, each just 150 words long. The four writers who took part in last winter's creative writing workshops at MGR had their submissions accepted. It is always satisfying when our efforts are rewarded. I wish them more fine writing! It's worth noting that I will be leading another series of creative writing

workshops beginning in January, 2018. If you know any budding writers, please let them know.

While I was in and around Montreal, I had a warm welcome from Nancy R. Lange, a poet you may have seen and heard at either MGR or the Alliance française. She invited me to lead two workshops on haiku in Laval and Ste. Adèle. She was also kind enough to invite me to her Laurentian cottage where we talked and talked about literature. So? Some people discuss baseball statistics, others delve deep into Balzac's metaphors.

After spending these few weeks near the St. Lawrence, it

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We offer our warmest thanks to the four students who worked as guides, and took on other responsibilities, from May till August at MGR. From left to right: Chloé Poirier, Laurence Drainville, Ève Lemoine and Sydney Puhach

SEARCH FOR A NEW DIRECTOR

The Board of Maison Gabrielle-Roy offers its thanks to Baptiste Marcère, whose contract as executive director ended in August.

For a whole year, Baptiste took on the many challenges of his position, including organizing the programming and the annual Gabrielle-Roy brunch. He made a major contribution towards modernising and computerizing the way MGR works. We wish him well as he pursues his career.

The search for a new director is underway. Whoever is appointed will begin work at the beginning of October. In this transitional period, we are lucky to have the assistance of one of our summer employees, Chloé Poirier, who will work fulltime at MGR until the end of September.

If Riel had won

BY MATHIEU VILLENEUVE

The residence

Over the summer of 2017, thanks to the work of Baptiste Marcère, I was privileged to be able to take the position of writer-in-residence at Maison Gabrielle-Roy upon receiving a grant from the Government of Canada. For five weeks, in research for my next novel, which will focus on the Canadian West, I studied history books in the Centre du patrimoine, visited the most important places figuring in the history of Manitoba, and followed the trails of the old Red River Colony, of the Interlake and of New Iceland. I also had the good fortune to meet and talk with teachers from the University of St. Boniface and many people prominent in the field of Franco-Manitoban culture. I would like to thank: Lise Gaboury-Diallo, Annette Saint-Pierre, Rhéal Cenerini, J.R. Léveill  , Robert Nicolas,   tienne Rivard, Yves Labr  che, Doris Lemoine, Louise Dandeneau, Emmanuelle Rigaud, Paulette Duguay and, of course, the inimitable St  phane Oystryk.

Alternative History

In his *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, John Clute posits the idea that science fiction is a window opening onto the meaning of the world. Such writing does not tell us what to see, but rather where to look; it encourages us to imagine potential futures, parallel presents and possible pasts. In other words, science fiction urges us to be aware that our society cannot be limited to or summed up by what appearances make us think.

A particular sub-genre of science fiction, uchronia, urges the reader to consider the alternative versions of history that follow a Jonbar hinge. A Jonbar hinge, also called Jonbar point, is the fictional concept of a crucial point of divergence



Mathieu Villeneuve was born in Chicoutimi in 1990. His forebears were woodsmen and simple farmers, and he grew up hearing the tales of the forests and the tragedies in the countryside. His first novel, *Borealum tremens*, was published by La Peuplade on August 29 this year.

between two outcomes, a departure from the time line we know. For example, in Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee*, the southern states win the American Civil War. Philip K. Dick, the author of *The Man in the High Castle*, imagines that the Nazis and the Japanese win the 2nd World War. Vic Verdier has written a novel, *L'Empire bleu sang*, in which Jacques Cartier really does find precious stones at Cap-Diamant, thus making Quebec the richest colony in all the Americas.

Riel's Country

In my proposed novel, the point of divergence in time, the Jonbar point, occurs at

the end of the 18th century, when a devastating famine strikes France and Belgium. For ten years, boats carrying starving Europeans land at Grosse-  le, Quebec City and Montreal. The incoming mass of migrants forces Canada to send thousands of French-speaking colonists into the West, as yet still untamed. As a result, there will be no vote to set up a Confederation; Louis Riel will not be hanged and the Red River Colony will never become a mere province. On the contrary, aided by Quebec, the United States and France, Manitoba will become a very influential country, altering the fate of the M  tis and North American First Nations.

Topicality of the Western Novel

Several different interesting themes are played out in the novel.

Firstly, there is history, for the violent subjugation of the M  tis and of Native peoples in the Prairies and the execution of Louis Riel, the most serious abuses perpetrated by Canada, are replaced by a truly national project.

Then, generic, because uchronia meets the western novel, a genre that is almost completely absent in French-Canadian literature, precisely because the Riel Affair both stigmatized and repressed the collective story of the conquest of the West.

Finally, there is the question of identity, as this western uchronia will celebrate the victory of the First Nations communities in the West - whose members have for long been considered in many different governments as a lesser species of mankind - and that of the French-speaking M  tis nation which was, almost immediately after it appeared, cut off from power through a series of unjust laws.

Past, Present and Future

There is a growing groundswell of interest in rereading history: one can no longer question the importance of the Idle No More movement, of the many national enquiries held within First Nations communities, of the recent public apologies from the Liberal premier of Ontario regarding the forced assimilation of Franco-Ontarians, nor of the renewed interest in the M  tis question. Far from falling under the Siren spell of "pastism", this novel is wholly focussed on the future. Anyone who doesn't know his parallel pasts cannot grasp the infinite diversity of his potential futures...

◀ TIME TO DREAM AND WRITE Continued from page 1

was a great pleasure to come back to Manitoba and the company of the devotees of kukai in the Kukai Rouge group. At our last meeting, a picnic in the St. Norbert Arts Centre on August 24th, we shared haishas (haiku with illustrations) and haibuns (travel journals with haikus) that we had produced

during the summer. If you would like to join us, don't hesitate, you can find us at MGR on the third Thursday of every month, at 7 p.m. You don't need to know anything about haiku; we'll teach you. All that is required is an interest in creative writing.

I will be continuing my work as writer-in-residence

through the coming fall, winter and spring months. In partnership with the Association des Auteurs.e.s du Manitoba fran  ais, plans are in the works to organize a writing circle. As for my own work, I am in the process of gathering background material for a play, a little something about power.

Fall programming at MGR

Livres en fête/Thin Air : Quebec Writers to Visit, September 29, 7.30 p.m. \$10

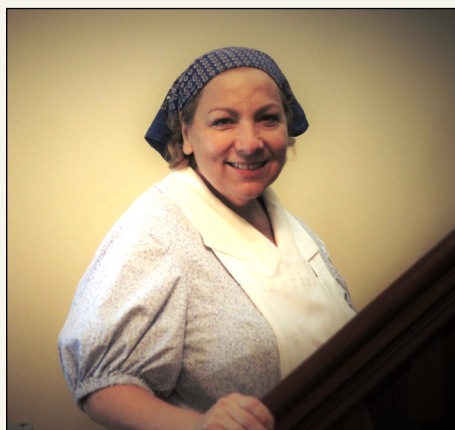
Members of the public are invited to meet two well-known women writers from Quebec - and to enjoy some tasty titbits. In her first novel, *À la recherche de New Babylon* (La Peuplade, 2015), Dominique Scali examined the myth of the Far West. Virginia Pésémapéo Bordeleau, a Cree-Métis, continues to explore an organic world, where elements of family and land, mythical animals, plants and rocks constantly renew its energy.

An Afternoon on the Veranda - Sat. Sept. 30 from 2 p.m. till 4 p.m., no charge

This is a unique chance to hear local Francophone writers read extracts from their work, in the shade of the leafy elm trees at Maison Gabrielle-Roy. This year, our writer-in-residence, Bertrand Nayet, has invited Guy Gauthier, Diane Lavoie, Louise Dandeneau, Roger Léveill  , Robert Nicolas and Charles Leblanc.

Nuit Blanche, Sat. Sept. 30, no charge

The evening begins at 7 p.m. with a performance of the play *A Visit with M  lina*. In this English version of Suzanne Kennelly's *La visite chez M  lina*, Paulette



Paulette Duguay as M  lina Roy in the play *A Visit with M  lina* at MGR.

Duguay will play Gabrielle Roy's mother and give an intimate view of the house. In the basement, L  a Pool's beautiful, nostalgic 1995 film on Gabrielle Roy will be screened on a loop. Visitors will also be able to take guided tours of the house.

A Visit with M  lina, two Saturdays, October 21 and 28 at 11 a.m., \$10, children under 16 admitted free

Tickets for these final shows of the year will be on sale at the door, but can also be bought on line on our Website

(<http://maisongabrielleroy.mb.ca>) (<http://maisongabrielleroy.mb.ca/>).

Hallowe'en at Gabrielle's, Saturday Oct. 21, Afternoon, no charge

Once again, adults, and children in particular, are invited to celebrate Hallowe'en at MGR. The programme includes: our traditional pumpkin-carving contest, scary stories and some crafts that are as creative as Dr. Frankenstein's! Further details will be announced in the media.

Franco-European writers from the Canadian West, Monday evening, Oct. 30, no charge

Fr  d  rique Bruyas, a reader from France, will read extracts from the works of French, Swiss or Belgian writers who lived in the Canadian West, for example Maurice Constantin-Weyer et Georges Bugnet.

Lise Gaboury-Diallo, the writer and professor at St. Boniface University, will provide context for the readings. This remarkable evening follows an international conference being held at the University of Alberta in Edmonton on the 27th and 28th of October. The conference is held in French and will examine the works of French, Swiss or Belgian writers who lived in the Canadian West.

The summer in review

New Boardwalk

MGR's new boardwalk is complete. The cost of materials was partly covered by a GoFundMe campaign that raised \$1,335. The work was entirely carried out by some volunteers to whom we offer our very sincere thanks. They are: Julien Allard, Dominick Blais, Roland Dion, Jean Dumas, Jacques Gagnon, Jacqueline Gosselin, Regis Gosselin and Baptiste Marc  re. The next work to be undertaken in the renovation of MGR will be the exterior painting of the building and the repair of the posts on the verandah. We hope to begin the work this fall.

Writing Competition

Maison Gabrielle-Roy organized a writing competition *Notre terre* (Our Land) in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Canada; the winners were announced on July 1st. The winners in the grades 11 and 12 category were Justine Sutherland (1st), Sophie Moulaison (2nd) and Callum Goulet-Kilgour (3rd). For the over-18 category, the 1st prize was

awarded to Blandina Arts, the 2nd to Gis  le Beaudry, the 3rd to Alfred Laurencelle and the 4th to Linda Racicot. Congratulations to all the winners. Their texts were published in *La Libert  * on July 12, 2017. We offer thanks to all who participated and to the sponsors of the competition: Canada 150 Fund, Francofonds, Chapters and *Prairie Fire*.

Marie-Anna Roy in the Limelight

The basement of Maison Gabrielle-Roy was packed to the rafters on August 30th to watch the film *Marie-Anna Ad  le Roy, ma  trese d'  cole et   crivaine de l'Ouest canadien (et quelques observations concernant Gabrielle Roy)*. The documentary about Gabrielle Roy's sister was produced by Cheryl Georget Soulodre, professor of French at the University of Saskatchewan.

We are very grateful to M^{me} Georget Soulodre who came to St. Boniface for the occasion and who gladly answered questions from the over 40 attendees. We hope to show the documentary again at some time on the coming months.



A Family Visit

On August 18, MGR was delighted to receive a visit from Guy Corriveau, Gabrielle Roy's nephew. (His mother was Marcel Carbotte's sister.) Mr. Corriveau presented to us the original certificate that formally named Gabrielle-Roy Island, situated in the Interlake. He also donated documents to the Centre du patrimoine in St. Boniface. Our grateful thanks to Mr. Corriveau, seen on the left of the photo as he handed the naming certificate to Julien Allard, vice-president of MGR.

► Gabrielle Roy HEADLINES

DESIGNATION

► **Bonheur d'occasion**

On August 12, the Quebec Ministry of Culture announced that the publication of Gabrielle Roy's first novel in June 1945 was being recognised as an 'historic event'. Quebec has a law on the cultural heritage of the province which recognises that significant persons, events and places should be formally named when it is in the public interest that they should be known, protected, passed on or otherwise promoted.

THEATRE

► **La détresse et l'enchantement**

Gabrielle Roy's autobiography will be adapted into a solo theatrical production

featuring Marie-Thérèse Fortin and will be performed at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde (<http://tnm.qc.ca>), in Montreal, from February 27 till March 10, 2018.

BOOKS

► **La littérature québécoise en 30 secondes**

Michel LAURIN, published by Hurtubise (Montreal), 2017, 160 p., \$23

From tales of Jacques Cartier's travels to the novels of Dany LaFerrière (member of the Académie française), the author traces the history of Quebec literature. While he underlines the importance of *Bonheur d'occasion/The Tin Flute*, Michel Laurin points out that it was not in fact the first Québécois novel with an urban setting. Roger Lemelin had pu-

blished *Au pied de la pente douce/The Town Below* a year earlier, in 1944. His long novel brought a touch of humour to his depiction of life in the working-class district of St. Sauveur, Quebec City.

BLOGS

► **Madame lit**

<https://madamelit.me/2017/07/31/madame-lit-une-ecrivaine-ou-un-ecrivain-par-mois-juillet-2017-gabrielle-roy/>

Madame lit is a French language blog written by a Quebec French teacher who loves literature with a passion. On 31 July, the blog presented a succinct and accurate overview of Gabrielle Roy's main books, with extracts.

MEDIA

► **Saint-Henri, un passé en quête d'avenir**

<http://journalmetro.com/local/sudouest/actualites/1181099/les-voix-de-montreal-saint-henri-un-passe-en-quete-davenir/>

On August 8, 2017, the daily *Métro* in Montreal ran an article about the Montreal district that was made famous in *Bonheur d'occasion*.



MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION

OUR MISSION

Maison Gabrielle-Roy was established to offer the community – and indeed the whole world – a museum that is a fitting tribute to Gabrielle Roy, to disseminate her works and to protect a cultural heritage.

OUR VISION

375 Deschambault Street is the house where Gabrielle Roy was born in 1909, and lived until she left Manitoba to travel in Europe in 1937. Now restored as a museum, it is designated both a Provincial and a National Historic Site and houses a collection of objects and artifacts associated with Gabrielle Roy and her family during the years 1909-1937. The museum enables young people, researchers and the general public to learn more about the author herself, her works and her influence. Maison Gabrielle-Roy is also an important cornerstone of the cultural development of St-Boniface.

MEMBERSHIP

Enclosed please find \$25.00 for my annual membership in support of the museum's activities and the preservation of our cultural heritage. I understand that my payment entitles me to receive the museum's newsletter.

DONATION

I would like to make a donation to Maison Gabrielle-Roy.
(A tax receipt will be issued.)

\$150 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 other \$ _____

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Gabrielle Roy
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(Please make cheque payable to La Maison Gabrielle-Roy)

Provincial Support

The Manitoba Francophone Affairs Secretariat has, for the financial year 2017-2018, renewed the **\$50,000** annual grant that Maison Gabrielle-Roy has received over several years. We wish to thank the Manitoba government for its ongoing support, that allows MGR to maintain the house where Gabrielle Roy was born, to promote information about the life and works of the writer, to encourage reading and writing in French and to contribute to economic tourism in the province, especially but not only among Francophone visitors.

Many thanks...

- to **Rinella Printers Limited** for sponsoring parts of the printing costs of this newsletter;
- to **Doreen Pruden** for the English translation of this newsletter.