



# McGill

School of  
Continuing Studies  
McGill Community  
for Lifelong  
Learning

## The Newsletter

[www.mcgill.ca/mcll](http://www.mcgill.ca/mcll)

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### Ann Pearson at the Victoria Gallery

In November 2016, the Gallery at Victoria Hall, Westmount, displayed eleven of Ann Pearson's images, along with three other photographers from the Montréal Camera Club, in an exhibition entitled, *Perceptions: Environmental Essays*. Ann has been photographing seriously since the 1970s and was an active member of Canada's first artist-run gallery for women, Powerhouse Gallery, founded in 1973. During the International Women's Year celebrations of 1985, Ann exhibited her works at the Musée d'Art Contemporain, at the Saidye Bronfman Centre as well as at Powerhouse Gallery. Latterly, she has exhibited at the Visual Arts Centre in Westmount and in the MCLL lounge. An MCLL member for over ten years, Ann has moderated several study groups, given lectures, as well as serving on many committees and on Council. In 2015, she organized the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Art Exhibition of MCLL artists.

Charlotte French



### Gael Eakin – *en plein air*

Gael began drawing at an early age and even toyed with art as a high-school matriculation subject. It was art that took her to the Académie Julien in Paris where she studied for a year. Back in Montréal she attended McGill University hoping that a degree might give her a career as a medical illustrator but evolving technology snuffed out that dream! She went on to earn a Fine Arts degree from Concordia which was followed by years of workshops, private study and seven years of etching at the Sadie Bronfman Centre. For eight years she served as a docent at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and has held exhibitions every year since 1962 at galleries: in Georgeville, Westmount Library, Victoria Hall and the Visual Arts Centre.

She has fulfilled over 300 commissions for paintings and drawings of public institutions and private houses in Canada, the United States, England and the West Indies and has illustrated seven publications. She has tried various media and techniques but water color remains her favorite, and is especially fond of painting *in situ* and *en plein air*.

Lesley Régnier



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As President of MCLL, it has been a privilege to serve with our dedicated Council members to further the joy of learning. Our program relies on the moderators and lecturers who volunteer their time to bring us such a wide variety of interesting topics and I am truly grateful to all of them. The members of the Curriculum Committee continue to come up with new ideas for our peer-learning study groups and lectures; for example, the collaboration this winter with the Royal Montreal Curling Club to offer ten sessions on wellness with exercises and lectures.

Other initiatives have already started up or are at the planning stage. Members of Council were asked to tabulate the hours they and their committee members spent volunteering for MCLL during one month (February) to see for ourselves the tremendous amount of time put into running our organization. To celebrate volunteer week at the end of April, we are planning a reception to thank some of our longstanding volunteers for their contribution to our community as well as all our artists who have exhibited their works of art in the lounge during the year.

Ruth Allan Rigby and her dedicated committee are in the process of organizing a symposium on lifelong learning and living to be held in November 2017. This symposium would form a springboard for other symposiums to be held, with the Dean of Students, as we head up towards the 2020-2021 bicentennial McGill celebrations.

I am very much encouraged by the record number of new members who have joined us since the fall of 2016. The Planning Committee has undertaken a telephone survey of new members to learn their impressions during their first term at MCLL. Most new members hear about us through word of mouth so please continue to talk to your friends and acquaintances about us and our community.

Our AGM will be held on March 24 at Le Nouvel Hôtel. The guest speaker will be Dr. Annmarie Adam, Chair of the Department of Social Studies of Medicine and McGill University holder of the Stevenson Chair in the History and Philosophy of Science, including Medicine.

We are most fortunate to have members who have been active since the first of our 27 years, some of them acting as moderators who have shared their interesting topics with us for many years. Steps are now being taken to establish proper archives of all of our past programs, events and happenings to ensure we have an efficient and complete record of MCLL.

Juliet Wait

## EDITORIAL

To remind you that warmer days are on their way, we decided to devote the front and back cover pages to MCLL artists and their depictions of the outdoors, urban scenes and the rolling hills and streams of the Eastern Townships. On the inside pages, we focus on the home: places where we have lived for many years of our life or new homes among other people, homes we share with others, with visitors on special occasions or during our later years when we take the plunge and move out of the family home. But wherever we live and however much we enjoy life at home, I find that MCLL provides that warm feeling of community. Come any day, any time, and you will find people here ready to share ideas, opinions, thoughts... Some of our fascinating members are featured here in this newsletter. Read on!

Lesley Régnier

## NEW MODERATORS AND LECTURERS

### Nadia Alexan - Battling through

Along with Edmund Burke, Nadia Alexan believes that, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil, is that men of good will do nothing." Born in



Alexandria, Egypt, of Christian Coptic heritage, Nadia arrived in Montreal in 1967, armed with a B.A. Honors in English Literature. She later completed B.A. degrees in Education and Political Science, as well as studies in Journalism. She had a successful career as a professional high school

teacher, while throwing herself into a slew of engaging activities.

Well-known for her dynamism, she worked on the Women's Issues Committee of her school board, in 1980, to improve the lot of female teachers. Later, she founded and coordinated the Montreal Chapter of the Council of Canadians, which promotes social and economic justice, and joined the NDP Québec Board,

running as an NDP candidate during the 2004 federal elections. She was also a candidate for Québec Solidaire in the riding of Westmount St. Louis in 2008.

Her progressive advocacy for social justice in the media has led to many invitations to speak on different political issues by many Montreal organizations. She was interviewed for CBC's *The National* in 2013, for example, and by Céline Galipeau on Radio-Canada's *Téléjournal* in 2014. She has also organized hundreds of conferences featuring such notable speakers as Julius Grey, renowned jurist and lawyer, Laure Waridel, Fair Trade and Environment advocate, writer, Maude Barlow, chairperson of the Council of Canadians, and McGill's professor Henry Mintzberg, among others.

She has also testified in front of many provincial and federal commissions, notably, the CRTC, in favor of the CBC and public broadcasting. She has also testified against a two-tiered healthcare system in front of the Romanow and Claire Commissions. In 2005, she testified against Canada's participation in the Afghan War in front of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Commerce, then two years later she testified in front of the Bouchard/Taylor Commission investigating "reasonable accommodation," in favor of a secular society and the right to dissent and challenge religious beliefs. Recently she testified in front of the BAPE Commission against the Turcot Exchange project.

In celebration of International Women's Day in 2003, she was chosen as "Woman of the Year," by the Montreal weekly newspaper *Place Publique* for her struggle against the privatization and commercialization of public institutions.

In October 2007, Nadia founded "Citizens in Action Montreal," a non-profit, non-partisan progressive organization of concerned citizens for the promotion of social, economic, ecological and political justice and for the lobbying of governments for the public good. Her monthly conferences are held at Concordia's School of Community and Public Affairs.

In the summer of 2015, Nadia was chosen to attend a climate leadership training course with Al Gore, former Vice-president of the United States. In addition to moderating a study group on the power of corporations in the world, she freelances for different newspapers including *Le Devoir*, and also has a blog

(in French) with the *Huffington Post Québec*. Nadia is well-known for her ardent activism against the creeping privatization of our public services and institutions, the travesty of tax havens, as well as the commercialization of every aspect of our lives. She is also devoted to a fair fiscal system, which would benefit all Canadians, not just the one per cent at the top. MCLL certainly knows where to turn if ever it needs someone to wage its battles!

Lesley Régnier

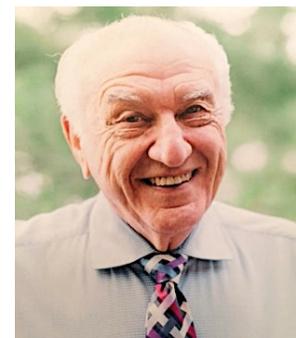
### **Rosalie Acutt**



Born in England, Rosalie lived most of her life in Vancouver where she taught English to international students at the University of British Columbia for 25 years. Upon her retirement in 2011, she moved to Montreal to join her partner, Martin. She was very happy to discover MCLL because, for someone in a new city, it provided interesting activities as well as an excellent way to make friends.

Bravely, for a relatively new member of or community, Rosalie is making her first attempt at moderating a study group. "The UNESCO World Heritage really appeals to me because it combines several of my interests: travel, history and art and architecture," she explained. She herself has visited several heritage sites in France, Italy, Mexico and, most recently, Colombia. Knowing that many members of MCLL have similar pursuits, it is sure to prove a stimulating and enjoyable session for everyone.

Lesley Régnier



### **Dr. Harry Rosen - a man of many talents**

Renaissance man par excellence, Harry Rosen is one of the new members and lecturers at MCLL, and one of the many members who enrich our lives just being in their presence. In interviewing him, I was struck by his warmth and intelligence – sort of like being in the presence of a man larger than life. Tall and still handsome at 87,

Harry devoted sixty years of his life to dentistry, particularly reconstructive surgery, and he is a leader in prosthodontics and restorative dentistry. He is an emeritus professor of dentistry at McGill where he assuredly mentored and inspired many of his students. And for fifty years, Harry has been a sculptor, specializing in earthworks and massive stone sculptures, many of which have been donated and may be spotted at various locations around Montreal and Toronto. (See back cover page)

Sandra Frisby

### **Barbara Silverman**



A native Montréaler, Barbara Silverman is a published author of both non-fiction and fiction works. In the world of fiction, she has written two novels based on Star Trek Voyager for the Fan Fiction community, with her stories being read worldwide. However, her time is mostly devoted to non-fiction, especially in the area of prehistoric and ancient history, or researching and writing

about species of wildlife most people never hear about. She has written stories for the Zoological Association, Bird Protection Québec, the Royal Astronomical Association of Canada, and the Montréal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association and published a non-fiction book, *The Sands Of Time*.

Barbara is currently moderating a study group on Prehistoric and Ancient History where she talks about and discusses various aspects of history dealing with the people usually not presented in history books. She also gives the occasional lecture based on a subject of her varied interests such as mythology, history of astronomy and wild life.

Charlotte French

### **Ann Pearson on composer Jennifer Higdon**

Ann Pearson will give a repeat lecture on a major contemporary classical music composer whose works are performed more than those of any other living American composer yet who is largely unknown to most of us. Jennifer Higdon teaches at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and has served as composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestras among others.

In 2009, Higdon won the annual Pulitzer Prize for Music for her Violin Concerto and one year later a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for her Percussion Concerto. She is so in demand as a composer that she has enough commissions from various solo artists and orchestras to keep her busy until 2020.

What's fascinating about this composer is that she came to know classical music only at university. She grew up in a household filled with folk, rock and country music. In high school she taught herself to read music and became a flute player in a marching band, occasionally called on to join the band's drum corps. One of her teachers encouraged her to compose music for an upcoming master class and she "caught the bug".

There are many entertaining interviews with Higdon on YouTube and many performances of her works are also available. As an introduction to this fascinating composer, Ann recommends "Pale Yellow", a trio for piano, cello and violin, the Concerto for violin and orchestra, No. 1, and the Concerto for orchestra.

### **June 16 on the horizon!**

Did you know that Montreal's Bloomsday Festival is the biggest outside Dublin? And do you know why MCLL is involved? Because the founders of Bloomsday Montréal, David and Judith Schurman, are both members of MCLL as are over half their committee members. You are therefore entitled to a privileged glimpse at the early plans for this year's event.

There will be readings from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Local pubs are in cahoots, providing Irish culture by the pint and enough atmosphere to make you believe that you just walked in from O'Connell Street in downtown Dublin. Drop in for a pub supper and a quiz or go listen to Joycean stories, songs and piano music over the lunch hour. You'll hear some of the best-loved tunes that appear in the works of James Joyce.

The keynote speaker this year is leading Joycean scholar, Michael Kenneally, principal of Concordia's School of Irish Studies who will take us on a literary journey through the most famous passages of *Ulysses*. You may be lucky enough to meet Jim Kelly, Canada's new ambassador to Ireland, who plans to attend. Registration opens April 1, 2017. Also, if you have a soft spot for the Irish and good warm clothing,

join the Bloomsday Montréal stalwarts who will be marching with our banner in the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 19. Contact organizer Kevin Wright at [kwright@colba.net](mailto:kwright@colba.net).

## FOCUS ON HOME

### Home: Where it is and where it might be

The word “home,” probably one of the most heart-warming words in the language, often sends icy fingers creeping around our hearts when we preface it with “rest.” Whatever euphemism we use, “rest home” still signals loss of independence at the very least. Some, by far the minority, elect to go to a care facility, recognizing their own failing powers of memory, or admitting that they no longer like to cook or clean, or simply to combat loneliness, especially in our long Québec winters. Most of us, however, will eventually be forced to acknowledge the necessity of placing ourselves or a loved one in some sort of assisted living residence.

Evaluating the suitability of a residence is not an easy task. Some suggest that we note whether or not the staff and management are professional and respectful. This can hardly be determined by one or two quick visits in which the management, if not the staff, is in “sales-pitch” mode. One can ask to see a menu. Apart from the fact that the menu is guaranteed to be and of necessity will be fairly bland, one can inquire about the willingness and capability of accommodating specific dietary concerns. Cost is, of course, a major concern, especially when there may be hidden or additional outlays.

You’ve heard all this before of course. What one facility lacks in some areas, another facility will lack in another. Probably the crucial element that overrides any other concern is how close the chosen residence is to family members. If time and distant constraints limit the number of family visits, you may have to seek out – and pay for – a private visitor who will drop in at least once a week and be prepared to spend quality time with you or your loved one. Naturally there are recreation and educational programs at most residences but these do not take the place of a visitor who has come especially to see you or your loved one.

Sandra Frisby

### Sharing one's home

Denise Lord is one of our wonderful SPEAK volunteers. Here’s how she spent Valentine’s Day this year with her students. “The day began with the

Heritage Day celebration at St Andrew’s and St Paul’s Church. What a pleasure it was to witness the rich



### Denise's annual Valentine get-together with SPEAK partners

multiculturalism in Montreal! Proud flag-bearers from 26 countries moved us to tears. We are, indeed, a country of immigrants. Such a gift! After the service, we walked to Eggspectation for our traditional Valentine brunch. Love was in the air! Good camaraderie and interesting conversation were enjoyed by all! Everyone agreed to do it again next year." For more information about the SPEAK program, contact Sandra Frisby at [sandrafrisby@gmail.com](mailto:sandrafrisby@gmail.com).

### Home from home?

#### Social work and real estate: a combined career



Joyce Blond interviews Bonnie Sandler who has given lectures at MCLL on different occasions.

*Q: Bonnie, you are a social worker and a licensed real-estate agent. What made you become a social worker?*

*A: I was always interested in people and wanted to help people. My first idea was to become a human rights lawyer and save the world one person at a time. The choices I made led me into social work and I practiced that profession for many years in several different fields.*

*Q: What motivated you to obtain your real-estate license?*

*A: People kept telling me to go into sales; they would say I could sell anything even though I had never sold anything in my life. At the same time, many of my*

clients were seniors with issues related to their residence, to home ownership and to the need for assisted living. The real-estate license would enable me to help with these situations.

*Q: How do you combine these two professions?*

A: I worked as a social worker for many years. My career has evolved into becoming a geriatric consultant with a special expertise in dementia and Alzheimer's disease with a focus on senior housing. The two careers overlap allowing me to provide a full service to seniors considering or requiring a move. My real estate career does not only service seniors but rather all people looking to buy or sell a home. I feel that there is a great balance and blend of these two careers in so far as the services I offer and for my personal satisfaction.

*Q: Why do you think this happened?*

A: I started to see more cases of people who had suffered loss, either loss of a loved one or loss of their own autonomy. They were worried about the future. They had become fearful of isolation, their social network was shrinking, they felt unable to maintain their home by themselves, they worried about what would happen if they became ill, life seemed too complicated and they needed advice with regard to what was available for them and what might be their best option. By wearing two hats I could counsel them, I could refer them to the right professionals to make a will and mandate, I could help them downsize, I could sell their house, I could find them the appropriate place to live.

*Q: How do you go about finding the right place for a person to live?*

A: First of all you have to assess the wishes, needs and the capacity of the person which, as a social worker, I am qualified to do. The person might be perfectly capable of living alone in a rental apartment without the problems of home ownership. This would simplify his life and remove stress. I can sell his house for him and refer him to an accountant and/or investment specialist so that the money obtained from the sale is properly handled. If the person doesn't want to live alone I can suggest an autonomous residence. If he needs a minimum amount of help with everyday living, I can find an assisted living accommodation for him. If more help is required I can find the appropriate placement. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Every individual/family is unique, calling for a proper understanding of their

needs and wishes in order to match them to the appropriate housing resource.

*Q: Are you ever consulted in cases where someone in poor health and/or lacking capacity wants to stay at home but requires care?*

A: Yes. These cases can be extremely difficult depending on how much home care is required and the number of family and friends available to help. I will suggest different ways to cope and bring in home care services as well as the CLSC which is often helpful in these situations. Full home care can be quite costly and unfortunately not everyone is able to afford 24/7 home help. I will review budgets before suggesting any kind of plan, home care or a move to a residence.

*Q: You seem to provide a one-woman all-inclusive service. Are all your clients seniors with varying needs and capacities?*

A: No. Sometimes perfectly healthy not yet seniors want questions answered about what may be in the future and come to me for a consultation. Others are the relatives, friends or caregivers of someone in poor health or lacking capacity. Sometimes the person responsible for a loved one in Montreal will live far away, even in another country. In such cases I not only perform the services I've mentioned but I will discuss the power of attorney, the mandate, the will, the end of life directives, the investments, the banking and any other relevant issues and refer to the appropriate professionals, follow up and report to the absent interested party. I also write a monthly column for the Senior Times concerning those issues which may be important to the general public.

*Q: Given your experience, what do you feel are the greatest problems facing our aging population?*

A: The lack of sufficient facilities for end-of-life care and a miscommunication with or lack of communication with regard to the client's wishes with regard to that care. There are waiting lists for public facilities which sadly lead to a fragile senior being moved into a transitional setting while waiting for a permanent bed. The senior residences in the Anglophone community are also harder to access with the closure of a few key residences

*Q: Do you have any special wishes for the future?*

A: I just want to keep on wearing all my hats, writing, speaking, advising, buying and selling property and helping as many people as I can.

Bonnie can be reached at 514 497-3775 or at [bonniesandler@gmail.com](mailto:bonniesandler@gmail.com).

## Follow-up on MCLL published authors

In response to our enquiry about other MCLL members who have had their work published, we have learned that Nicole de Rochemont has two books to her credit, each part of her autobiography: the first, about her childhood, is entitled *Snapshots: My Charmed Life*, and the second, about her married life in New York, is entitled *Dipped in Stardust*. Meanwhile, Sharen McDonald is an accomplished poet, and has published at least two books of verse: *Frankly Scarlet* and, more recently, *The Silken Air*.

Another poet in print is Martha Brook whom Charlotte French interviewed for this issue of *The Newsletter*. Her work, *Written for Strangers: Poems of Love & Eros*, came as quite a surprise, even to its author! "How does a strict Anabaptist girl, a graduate of the University of Manitoba, write an ironic book about Eros?" she wonders. By accident, she explains, she became involved in performance poetry projects in Montreal and in Women of Words, which she founded at Concordia University. "When I was young, I was very, very young but now that I'm older, I'm bolder!" Lastly, Joan Felvinci, John's wife who has already exhibited her work in the lounge at MCLL, has just published a book entitled *Assorted Tales: Stories about New York, Nature and Ghosts*. Do we have any more published authors?

## Reading Suggestions March 2017

### Non-Fiction

**The Genius of Birds** by Jennifer Ackerman. The paperback edition will be out in April. A best-selling, award-winning bird book. Fun to read without being dumbed down. Extremely interesting new scientific information. Convincingly proves that to be called a "bird brain" should be considered a compliment.

**Hillbilly Elegy** by J.D. Vance (2016) hardback. It's difficult for us to understand what's going on in America these days. This best-selling engaging memoir should be a help.

**Food, Health and Happiness** by Oprah Winfrey. Discounted (2017) hardback. A wonderful buy at \$30. Oprah stops being a slave to dieting to share her recipes and her life in this beautifully illustrated joyous book.

**The Hidden Life of Trees: what they feel, how they communicate** by Peter Wohlleben. (2016) hardback. A charming and informative book. Will forever

change the way you think about trees and their role in the natural world.

### Fiction

**The German Girl** by Armando Lucas Correa (2016) paperback. Historical fiction at its best. A tragic largely forgotten part of Holocaust history, brought to life by fictional Hannah Rosenthal, the German girl of the title. Hannah is one of the few survivors of the St. Louis whose passengers, Jewish refugees from Germany, were almost all denied entry into Cuba. The Cuban part of the story is particularly interesting.

**Victoria** by Daisy Goodwin (2016) paperback. The book behind the popular PBS series. Based largely on Victoria's writings, a lively and plausible fictional biography. Will prepare you for the second part of the series.

**Nutshell** by Ian McEwan (2016) hardback. Probing and provocative. A twenty-first century riff on Shakespeare's Hamlet, told from the point of view of a fully formed foetus. Only McEwan could have pulled this off.

**Do Not Say We Have Nothing** by Madeleine Thien. Discounted hardback \$25. The winner of multiple literary awards, Montréaler Madeleine Thien is now an internationally recognized literary celebrity. Her novel focuses on the lives of musicians caught up in the traumas, turmoil and repressions of the cultural revolution and its aftermath. Beautifully written, challenging yet compulsively readable.

**Ragged Company** by Richard Wagamese. First published in 2008, this book by Ojibway author Richard Wagamese has become a Canadian classic. His novel exposes us to the stories and experiences of a group of street people. Gut-wrenchingly raw but in the end spiritually uplifting as we engage with them to learn the true meaning of "family", "love", and "home".

Pamela Sachs

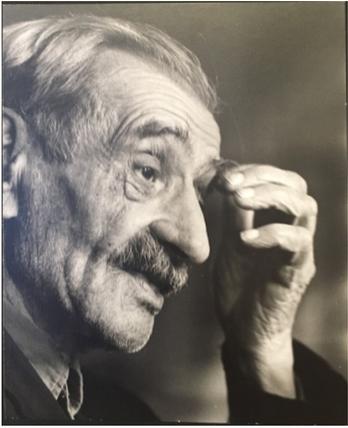
### Newsletter Committee

Chair: Lesley Régnier;

Contributing editors: Joyce Blond-Frank, Charlotte French, Sandra Frisby, Noga Emanuel, Pamela Sachs;

With invaluable assistance from McGill students Nahla Choukatli and Ornella Ch-Hoy-Mi.

## Gloria Harding - Moving Pictures



Gloria Harding developed her hobby, black and white photography, in the sixties and seventies, wandering around town on the lookout for interesting subjects or a moment in time to be captured. She set up her own darkroom to develop her films, making contact sheets, using an enlarger, dodging (reducing the intensity) and burning, all to produce a required effect or to set a certain mood. "For me, photography is visual poetry," says Gloria.



"Using a camera is subjective," she continues. "The camera is but a machine. It is I who recognize the feeling in what catches my eye through the viewfinder." The prints reproduced here are a small sample of the sights that stirred her: the old gentleman in mid reflection, the short-sighted girl forcing herself to write her thoughts in the park...

## Dr. Harry Rosen – A builder

Harry Rosen's journey as an artist began when he and his family bought land in the Laurentians and he began uniting the 17 families in his community by cutting trails throughout the 400 acres and building retaining walls and terraces. He invented a system of pulleys and come-alongs that allowed him to move massive rocks from the lake and the shoreline to create a safe swimming environment for the children in the community. But his mission was really to improve the beauty of the environment, using local rocks and repositioning the components, working with nature and exploiting the dynamism of the rocks themselves. This love of rocks naturally led to an interest in sculpting them, reforming and shaping them and creating sculptures impressive in size, grace and message. His "Little Hercules", almost 2.5 meters tall and wearing a baseball cap on backwards, is in transit from the old to the new Montreal Children's Hospital as an inspiration to strength. In "The Connection", gracing the entrance to the Segal Center, two figures lean into each other, expressing our necessary connection with and dependence on other people. "Maximus" is an inspiration to the children and their parents who count on the MacKay Center for encouragement and support. All the sculptures are donated, and Harry shows no signs of slowing down. Go to [drharryrosen.ca](http://drharryrosen.ca) for more information and inspiration.



Segal Centre for Performing Arts Front View of The Connection, November 13, 2011