

March 2006

Number 83

# Le Trésor des Kirouac

Bulletin of the descendants of Urbain-François Le Bihan, sieur de Kerboach



2006 — Tenth anniversary of the death of Jan Kerouac (Photo taken in Ellensburg, WA, USA, Winter 1978, photographer unknown, collection Jacques Kirouac)

Kérouac ✠ Kéroack ✠ Kirouac ✠ Kyrrouac ✠ Kérrouack ✠ Kirouack

## *Le trésor des Kirouac (English Edition)*

*Le Trésor des Kirouac*, the news bulletin of the descendants of Urbain-François Le Bihan, sieur de K/voach, is published four times a year in two editions, a French version and an English version, and is distributed to all members of the Association des familles Kirouac inc. Permission to reproduce any article must be requested from the AFKFA beforehand.

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*L'Association des familles Kirouac inc.  
168, rue Baudrier, Beauport (Québec) G1B 3M5 (Canada)*

*Legal Deposit 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2006  
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec  
National Library of Canada*

### *Responsibility*

*In Le Trésor des Kirouac, the sole responsibility of the  
contents of the articles lies with each author.*

### *Printing*

*French Version : 160 copies  
English Version : 60 copies*

*ISSN 0833-1685*

**Subscription : Canada: \$22 CAD; USA: \$22 USD**

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## From the President

During the last weekend in February, sixty-four family associations took part in the fifth *Salon des familles souches* (Original Families (Genealogical) Fair) at Place Laurier Shopping Mall in Saint-Foy, Quebec. For the second time the AFKFA was taking part in such a Fair but for the first time in Quebec City. The Board of Directors decided to put our association into the limelight for the benefit of all in the greater Quebec City area but also to make themselves better known to the hundred or more Kirouac families living in and around the Old Capital.

In October 2003, the AFKFA took part in the first *Original Families Fair* held in Montreal. Rather unexpectedly the AFKFA was put into the spotlight thanks to an article written by Mrs. Charlie Fidelman, published in *The Gazette*, Montreal's English daily, following Michel Bornais' talk on Jack Kirouac at that Fair on the Saturday. Our secretary's lecture made immediate news thus putting our association in the limelight.

This year, though it did not get such press coverage, the genealogy fair at Place Laurier showed to the AFKFA members, who answered thousands of questions during the three-day event, that our surname does interest lots of people and that many indeed are curious to find out about our two world-famous cousins Brother Marie-Victorin and Jack Kerouac. The occasion was deemed a success and it was unanimously agreed that the AFKFA should take part again in the future.

I take this opportunity to thank the generous volunteers who made our participating in the Fair such a success: Marie Kirouac, Céline Kirouac, Lucille Kirouac, Robert

Kirouac, André Kirouac, Michel Bornais and Jacques Kirouac.

It is important to give our Association greater visibility, the *Original Families Fair* did just that in the Quebec City Region and, in Montreal, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Botanical Garden will to the same for the metropolis. The director of the Montreal Botanical Garden is inviting the AFKFA Directors to the VIP opening evening of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Furthermore, next autumn, after Brother Marie-Victorin's monument has been relocated to a more visible site, it will be rededicated during a special ceremony. All AFKFA members will be invited to this event. Date and time still have to be determined but should be announced in the June *Trésor*.

In order to enhance our visibility even more, in 2005, the Board of Directors felt it was important to completely rebuild our Web Site. Pierre Kirouac, from Trois-Rivières, who is in charge of this project, hopes very much to have the work completed in 2006. All current information about our Association will be available on the new site as well as, under various sections, a photo album, and a regularly updated message board. This revamped site will enable web surfers to share in the life of our Association by keeping abreast of the latest info. Thus it is hoped that the interest of the Kirouac members will be maintained and even enhanced and let us hope that it will also help increase our membership. Is it not true that the more we share our family heritage, the richer it becomes?



Photo : Studio Les Saules eng.

François Kirouac

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year, our annual K/ Family Gathering will take place in Kamouraska where the Association will unveil a monument at the Kamouraska Cradle to pay homage to our ancestor at the site where he was buried on March 6, 1736. This monument will give us the opportunity to publicly establish the true identity of our ancestor. It will underline the link between the text on the plaque unveiled in 1980 where our ancestor's name is Maurice Louis LeBrice de Keroack and his true identity, Urbain-François le Bihan, as discovered by Clément Kirouac and Patricia Dagier in 1999.

This ceremony will firmly establish the result of a century-long search. Our ancestor's true identity will finally be written in stone and the granite monument will be installed where, in 1736, a simple wooden cross would have been planted identifying a "voyageur" known to all as Alexandre de K/voach. You are all invited to attend this special gathering on Saturday, August 5, 2006.



# From the Secretary's Desk

## NOTICE ABOUT SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Following a recent decision by the AFKFA Board of Directors, members who have not yet paid their membership dues for the current year, will be receiving the March issue of the *Trésor des Kirouac* with a note stating that their membership is overdue and that this is their last issue of our bulletin unless payment is received ASAP, i. e. before the next issue goes to press. Please make sure that your membership is renewed on time; of course if your payment has been sent, please ignore this notice.

## THE CRADLE OF OUR K/ FAMILY IN KAMOURASKA

At the last board meeting, on January 14, the Directors were presented with tenders for a monument commemorating our ancestor's burial in the historical Kamouraska cemetery. Mrs. Lucille Kirouac is in charge of this project and the unveiling will take place on Saturday, August 5, 2006.

## FAMILY GATHERING 2006 – 2007 AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2006

As this bulletin goes to press, it has been decided that the 2006 Annual Kirouac Gathering will be held in Kamouraska, the cradle of the K/ family. This will be the occasion for the unveiling of the monument identifying the burial place of our ancestor in New France. The 2006 Annual General Meeting will also be held in Kamouraska the same day. It will be a one day programme leaving Sunday entirely free.

The second Kirouac 2006 gathering, date and programme still to be confirmed, will take place a few weeks later at the Montreal Botanical Garden during the celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> year of the foundation by Conrad Kirouac, better known as Brother Marie-Victorin, F.E.C. It will be a major event at which the De Kervoach descendants

will be invited to celebrate the memory of their illustrious cousin Conrad.

Various suggestions have been put forward for the 2007 annual gathering including Abitibi\*, ExpoRail Museum\* in St. Constant\* and Chambly Fort\*. For the coming years, two one-day occasions are being considered to provide a lighter and more varied programme as well as enabling more families to attend. (\*see Web sites).

As for 2008, the *Fédération des familles souches du Québec* (FFSQ) should soon present a general plan for the 400th anniversary celebrations of Quebec City's foundation. It is already agreed that the AFKFA will be taking part. Depending on the FFSQ's general plan, our family gathering and the AGM could be held on different dates but one thing is sure, the AFKFA is planning a memorable occasion.

## AFKFA WEB PAGE

Due to some unforeseeable technical problems, the rebuilding of our Web Site has been delayed. It is hoped that it will be activated later this year.

## PASSING OF MARIE LUSSIER TIMPERLEY'S MOTHER

It is with great sadness that we heard about the passing of Mrs. François Gougeon-Lussier, mother of Marie Lussier Timperley, member of the AFKFA Board and translator of *Le Trésor des Kirouac*. To Marie and her family, we offer our deepest condolences.

## JACQUES KIROUAC, 1<sup>st</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF THE FFSQ COMMANDERS

It is with great pleasure and pride that we learned that our founding president, Jacques Kirouac, has been appointed the first president of the FFSQ (Fédération des familles souches du Québec) Commanders Council. Our sincere Congratulations.



Photograph : Yolande Genest

Michel Bornais

## THE AFKFA AT THE FFSQ FAIR AT PLACE LAURIER MALL IN SAINTE-FOY (QUEBEC)

The AFKFA was present at the Genealogical Fair at the Place Laurier giant shopping mall on February, 24, 25 and 26, 2006. Those who held the fort, so to speak, and answered thousands of questions were: Marie, Lucille, Céline, François, Jacques, Robert and André Kirouac, as well as J. A. Michel Bornais. The number of visitors at the booth largely exceeded our forecast and the interest shown by all proved the importance of our Association's mission.

## BROTHER MARIE-VICTORIN'S MEMORY FOREVER ALIVE IN CUBA

On January 8, 2006, by chance, Marie Kirouac listened to a broadcast in French on CBC-Radio-Canada, during Joël Le Bigot's Sunday morning radio talk show. He was interviewing Jean Fugère about his recent trip to Cuba. Mr. Fugère talked about Brother Marie-Victorin; how he is remembered, honoured and revered on this island. Marie-Victorin made several trips to Cuba, explored and studied this tropical paradise and wrote two books about its flora. Jean Fugère also talked about visiting an exhibition about Marie-Victorin with reference to Brother Léon also a Brother of the Christian Schools who lived in Cuba. More to be discovered on that front.

# Treasurer's Report

## for the year ending December 31, 2005

RENÉ KIROUAC

**T**he AFKFA 2005 financial report shows that the finances present a surplus of **\$1,586.04**. Generally speaking, for 2005 the revenues diminished by only \$94.66 but the expenses went down drastically by **\$1,289.92**.

Revenues from annual memberships have remained relatively stable since 2001. However, the revenues from the annual family gathering and particularly those generated by the sales of promotional objects have shown a decrease since 2004. As for the annual gatherings, the number of participants has been decreasing yearly, therefore we can no longer count on important revenue in the near future. As for the revenues generated by the sale of promotional items, even if it has decreased, it is now about the same as before 2004. Revenues of \$850 coming from the *Jacques Kirouac Funds* compensate for the fluctuation in other areas of

revenues.

Looking at the expenses, two items have greatly decreased: the publication of the quarterly bulletin and other items. "Others" meaning, that expenses in 2004 had increased due to buying copies of MON MIROIR (\$375) and MEMORY BABE (\$352.07). The special expense in 2005 is the printing of new membership envelopes at a cost of \$310.71 but it is offset by a saving of \$518.44 on the publication expenses of the bulletin when compared with last year's publishing expenses. This is the beginning of the positive effects resulting from the publishing cost rationalization of the TRÉSOR.

Indeed, a special meeting of the bulletin's production-editorial team, including some Board Members took place in July 2005. During that brain-storming session, various ways of cutting down costs were clearly identified. However, it is important to mention that none of the means considered as ways to cut production costs would in

any way negatively affect the bulletin content or quality. The decisions immediately positively affected the costs of the last two issues in 2005: number 81 in September and number 82 in December. For the financial year 2006, the production cost decrease is estimated between \$800 and \$1000 for the four bulletins compared with the 2005 costs.

Concerning the articles pertaining to the K/ crest (booklets, parchments and pins), in the care of the AFKFA, the anonymous lender is still owed \$1,322.79. The sales in 2005 brought in \$30 and this amount was reimbursed.

Finally, in the 2006 Budget, revenues are expected to be \$5,695 and expenses \$4,015, generating a surplus of \$1,680.

<i>The following chart shows the expenses for each of the four issues of the TRÉSOR in 2005</i>					
Issue Number	79	80	81	82	TOTAL
Production Costs	\$801.81	\$812.32	\$628.55	\$599.53	\$2,842.21



# Treasurer's Report for the year ending December 31, 2005

## REVENUES

<b>ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS 2005</b>			
Regular Members (126)		\$2,768.00	
Benefactors (41)		\$1,099.00	
		Sub-total	\$3,867.00
<b>PREMIUM AND INTERESTS</b>			
Exchange on U.S. currency		\$90.24	
Earned Interest		\$2.91	
		Sub-total	\$93.15
<b>GIFTS AND RECOVERED AMOUNTS</b>			
Jacques Kirouac Fund		\$850.00	
Gifts (Special Research Fund)		\$79.00	
Gifts (Budget Administration)		\$289.40	
Amounts Recovered		\$67.00	
		Sub-total	\$1,285.40
<b>ANNUAL GATHERING 2005</b>			
Surplus from annual gathering		\$387.37	
		Sub-total	\$387.37
<b>PROMOTIONAL ITEMS</b>			
Genealogies sold (1)		\$10.00	
Bulletins, albums, laminated plaques, bags and badges		\$227.99	
Historical Manuscript Booklets		\$0.00	
Book sale - <i>Mon Miroir</i> (2)		\$70.00	
Book sale - <i>Trip to Brittany Album</i> (1)		\$15.00	
Book sale - <i>Memory Babe</i> - French (1)		\$35.00	
		Sub-total	\$357.99
		Total revenues	\$5,990.91



# Treasurer's Report for the year ending December 31, 2005

## EXPENSES

### ADMINISTRATION

Canada Customs and Revenue (Annual Return 2005)	\$32.00	
Insurance - General Responsibility	\$309.04	
Memberships 2005 (FFSQ: \$1.50/member/year)	\$229.50	
Convention Registration	\$95.00	
Bank Fees (Bank book)	\$116.90	
	Sub-total	\$782.44

### LE TRÉSOR (Bulletins number 79 to 82)

AFKFA Secretariat	\$199.92	
Printing	\$1,375.97	
Shipping and Handling	\$212.56	
FFSQ Secretariat	\$273.46	
Canada Postage	\$380.37	
US postage	\$399.93	
	Sub-total	\$2,842.21

### AFKFA OFFICE EXPENSES

Postage Stamps	\$204.38	
Photocopying	\$8.28	
Stationery, envelopes and cards	\$91.30	
	Sub-total	\$303.96

### RESEARCH - THE ANCESTOR

Research in Quebec	\$0.00	
	Sub-total	\$0.00

### MISCELLANEOUS (Publicity and Promotion)

Registration to SGEQ (Webpage 2005)	\$45.00	
Other (Photos, Videos, display material, etc.)	\$43.46	
Other (Printing of Membership Envelopes)	\$310.71	
Purchase of <i>Mon miroir</i> (2 / 20): 3 left	\$50.00	
Purchase of <i>Memory Babe</i> (1 / 25) : 11 left	\$27.08	
	Sub-total	\$476.25

Total expenses	\$4,404.87
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SURPLUS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES 2005

	\$1,586.04
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# Treasurer's Report for the year ending December 31, 2005

<b>Bank Account</b>	
Balance as of December 31, 2004	\$7,198.58
Credited amounts from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005	\$5,731.21
Debits from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005	\$5,025.44
Balance as of December 31, 2005	<b>\$7,904.35</b>
Audited and approved by:	
Original signed on February 2, 2006	
<u>Roland Kirouac</u> M.S.C. R.I.A.	<u>René Kirouac</u> Treasurer

Marie-José Thériault is coming back with a new novel: *Obscènes Tendresses (Obscene Tenderness)*

**Article from *LE SOLEIL*, Quebec City daily, February 19, 2006:**

Montreal – The author, Marie-José Thériault, recently published a new novel, *Obscènes Tendresses*. Her last work was *Portraits d'Elsa* published at *Éditions Quinze* in 1990, and reprinted two years ago. Her latest novel is all about the five seasons of passion and love told through letters. Her two-hundred-page novel spans the gamut of love from joy to suffering.

Her next book, due in September 2007, will be a biography of her father, Yves Thériault. She has been working on this project for many years, it will be published by *Éditions du dernier havre*. PC

(NDLR) Marie-José Thériault (1945 - ), daughter of Yves Thériault (1915-1983) and Germaine Blanchet, is the granddaughter of Emmanuel Blanchet and Marie-Rose Émérentienne Kirouac (00841).

(Translator's Note) Various Websites available for Yves Thériault and Marie-José Thériault.

## OUR PRESIDENT'S MOTHER!



Happy 80th Birthday to Gisèle Bergeron, wife of Bruno Kirouac! (00714) Photo : François Kirouac





## A Wonderful Family Story (conclusion)

### LIFE TAKES BACK ITS RIGHTS

by Lucille Kirouac

On August 5, 2000, Yves married his sweetheart, Brigitte Lapointe, whom he mentioned in the interview with Angèle Coutu. When they were married, Yves knew that he would soon be receiving a kidney, nevertheless Brigitte had been ready to say 'YES' even before hearing the good news.

In April 2003, Louis-Philippe brought the greatest joy to the young couple. Yves fully enjoys his new life. Free from dialysis, free from various complications and long hospital stays; every week there are more hours for him to draw on for his numerous activities. Besides his work, obviously Louis-Philippe is next in line for his attention. But there is plenty of time left to look after the accounting of his son's daycare centre, the Rouyn-Noranda's improvisation group where he is the captain of *Le Soleil artisanal* team (free translation: Homemade Sunshine), and recently he was asked if he would consider putting himself up for election as School Commissioner. In addition, he remains as close as ever to those having to live with kidney deficiency, he is a Board Member regional representative of AGIR, Association Générale des Insuffisants Rénaux (General Association for Renal Deficiency).

When his brother, Louis, completed his Masters in Physical Education Science, he was recruited by the Federal Government to be part of *La Relève* programme(1). Then followed an intense training session in Ottawa, later in Nova Scotia and back to Ottawa. He and his wife, Cynthia Leclerc, now reside in Ga-

tineau (town on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, across from Ottawa). Cynthia also remembers only too well the strong emotional period before, during and after the surgeries when Louis gave one of his kidneys to his brother Yves. Since then, on July 3, 2004, Floriane was born, another lovely flower added to the family and sharing their lives. And, as you read these lines in March 2006, the stork is on its way with another addition to the family. When things do turn out so wonderfully well, it is easy to be grateful for such great gifts from life!

To Yves and Louis and their young families, all the very best for a long and wonderful life!

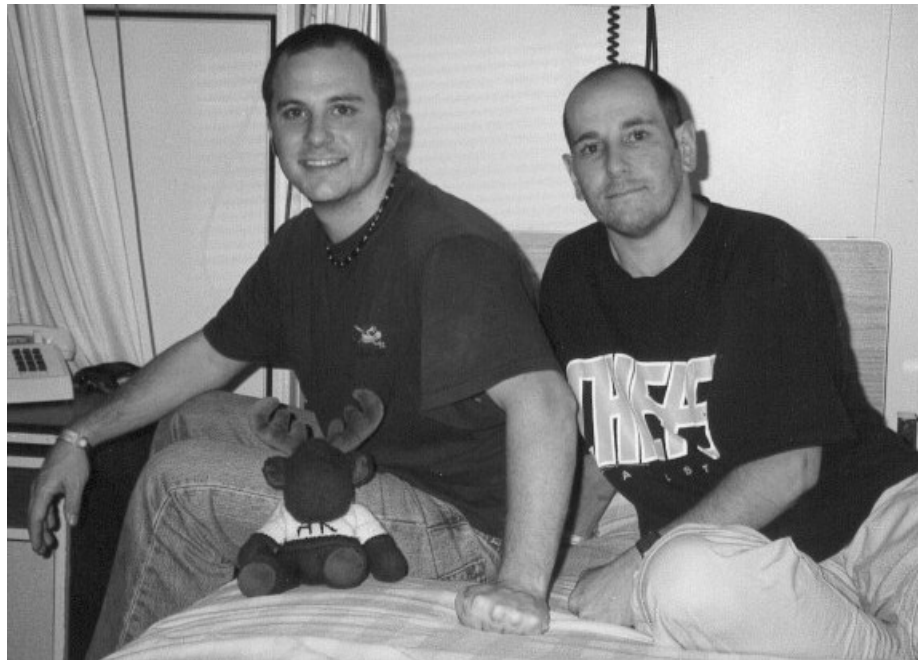
With much love from your Aunt Lucille



Lucille Kirouac

Collection Lucille Kirouac

(1) Federal government's **La Relève** initiative To Renew, retain, ... for the training of future generation. More info on the web.



Louis and Yves Dumulon  
Photo: collection Lucille Kirouac





Gerald Nicosia (Photo: *Memory Babe*, back cover)

## Biography of Jan Kerouac

by Gerald Nicosia

Jan Kerouac was born February 16, 1952, in Albany, New York. Her mother was a young seamstress, Joan Haverty, who had run away to New York City a couple of years earlier, to get away from a harsh and demanding mother. In New York, Joan had met the 28-year-old writer Jack Kerouac, whose first novel, *The Town and the City*, was a commercial failure earlier that year, 1950. Kerouac's friends were all getting married, and he felt lost and at loose ends, still living with his mother. Three weeks after meeting Joan, he married her on November 17, 1950. Six months later, he got Joan pregnant and—in the space of three weeks—wrote what would become his most famous and influential novel, *On the Road*. But *On the Road* was revolutionary in every sense. Typed nonstop on a 120-foot strip of drawing-paper segments taped together, it did not even look like a conventional novel. It was rejected everywhere. With no financial prospects whatsoever, Jack asked Joan to abort the baby. When she refused, he left her and returned to his mother, denying that the

baby was his. Joan returned to her own mother in Albany, and thus began the tragic saga of Janet Michele Kerouac.

Jan grew up in many different places—upstate New York, rural Missouri, after her mother briefly remarried, and, most notably, the tenements of the Lower East Side of New York. For the most part, she grew up in dire poverty, with her mother on welfare. Her mother lived what was known then as a “bohemian” life—lots of art and poetry, lots of lovers, lots of adventures, and little or no time for her children. Jan was a waif of the streets. By the time she was 13, she had tried heroin and briefly worked as a prostitute. Jan was growing up in the tumultuous 1960's, when promiscuous sex and lots of drugs, such as marijuana and LSD, were everywhere in her neighborhood. She was in and out of youth homes and juvenile detention facilities. Pregnant at 15, she ran off to Mexico with a neighbor named John Lash, an occultist and would-be writer who was almost ten years her senior and had already traveled the world.

Jan had already met her father when she was 10, in 1962, when her mother forced him to submit to a blood test to prove his paternity of Jan, and thus force him to pay child support for her. Jan loved him madly and prayed that he would come back, but he

never did. Once she managed to get his phone number and they talked for an hour on the phone, while he was very drunk. He told her, “You're not a Canuck, you're a Bretonne,” and advised her to be proud of her French heritage. Before she left for Mexico, she went with Lash to see him one last time in Lowell, Massachusetts. He sat beside her shyly on the couch and showed her the portrait of his brother Gerard on the wall, telling her of the child saint that he believed guided all his writing. But Jack's third wife, Stella Sampas, insisted that she leave their house. Before Jan left, Jack said, “Sure, go to Mexico, write a book.”

In Mexico, her baby girl Natasha was born dead, stillborn. She did write a book there with Lash, a novel called *The Influence*. Then they returned to the United States and began living amid the hippies in San Francisco. Eventually they migrated to a hippie commune in Little River, in northern California, where she heard on the radio of her father's death on October 21, 1969. Lash was not faithful to her, and eventually she left him, going “on the road” like her father, through Mexico and South America, to gain the adventures she felt she needed to become a writer. She eventually returned to the U.S. and took up residence in Santa Fe, where Lash occasionally rejoined her; and there she began her first serious autobiographical novel, which

she called *Everthreads*.

By June, 1978, when I met Jan in San Francisco, she had nearly finished *Everthreads*. She had also been living much of the time near her mother in Kittitas, Washington, where she worked as a dish washer and in a corn cannery. She had a poor, hard life, and was unknown in the literary world. I helped her to sell that first novel by connecting her with a literary agent named Joyce Cole, and *Everthreads*—with the title changed to *Baby Driver*—was published in 1981 to much acclaim.

Jan became something of a literary celebrity herself. She was invited to literary conferences around the world, and always she spoke of her love for her father, and how sorry she was that he was not capable of being a devoted father to her—that he had been a slave, essentially, to his writing and to his mother. His absence left a gaping hole in her life, that she filled with too much alcohol and too many drugs. Nevertheless, she was able to complete a second, major novel, a part of the trilogy of her life, called *Train Song*, which was published in 1988, again to excellent reviews.

Jan's books did not earn much money, however, and all this while she lived in poverty. It turned out the U.S. copyright law said she should have been entitled to half of her father's royalties—which were considerable—but the Sampas family never told her this fact.

When Jan found out by herself, from John Steinbeck's son in Boulder, the Sampases still refused to pay her the half of Jack's royalties she deserved to receive. Jan had to hire lawyers for three years to force the Sampases to begin paying the money in 1986. But even then, they were slow to send the checks, and did not send her all she was legally entitled to.

Jan's health was not good. She had inherited her father's bloodclotting disease, and of course because of her unhappiness she did not take good care of her health either. In 1991 she suffered complete kidney failure in Puerto Rico and nearly died. She was only kept alive by doing peritoneal dialysis, by herself, four times a day for the rest of her life. She tried earnestly to finish a third novel, *Parrot Fever*, the completion of the trilogy, before she died. But her life was disturbed again in 1994 by discovery of evidence that the Sampases had forged her grandmother's will, and left Jack Kerouac's estate (now valued at many millions of dollars) entirely to themselves. Without that forged will, it would have gone to her and her cousin Paul Blake, Jr., son of Jack's sister Caroline, Ti Nin, who had died in 1964.

In 1994, Jan filed a lawsuit against the Sampases, trying to have the fake will thrown out. That lawsuit, and the completion of *Parrot Fever*, consumed the remainder of her



Collection Jacques Kerouac

First portrait of Jan Kerouac  
(Courtesy of David Bower)

short life. Unfortunately she died on June 5, 1996, three months before her case went to trial in St. Petersburg, Florida. She very nearly completed *Parrot Fever*.

As her literary executor, I sold *Parrot Fever* to Thunder's Mouth Press. Then Jan's heir John Lash conspired with John Sampas, executor of the Kerouac Estate, to have me removed as her literary executor in 1999, before I could bring her case to trial. But the sale of *Parrot Fever* to Thunder's Mouth Press remained legal, and I found an excellent editor, Phil Cousineau, to put the manuscript into final shape for publication. However, in a sad denouement to this tragedy, in 2004, Thunder's Mouth Press, after receiving several valuable Jack Kerouac manuscripts from John Sampas, made a decision to cancel the publication of *Parrot Fever*, which Jan so dearly hoped would someday be published.



# My Memories of Jan Kerouac

by Gerald Nicosia

I knew Jan Kerouac for almost twenty years, and I have thousands of memories of her. When I first met her, she was 26 years old, a black-haired, blue-eyed, scintillating beauty. She was bright, very articulate, and very funny. She loved to camp, to mug, to make faces, to joke, to put people on with extravagant fake stories. She was absolute fun to be around. But I also found that she had a very dark and unhappy side. One day, having lunch in a New York City restaurant, I asked her what her destiny would be. I was wondering if she thought she would become a famous writer, as she was then completing her first novel, *Everthreads* (later published as *Baby Driver*).

Jan said, "My destiny is to be pulverized." I almost fell out of my chair. She was not joking that time. She was dead serious. She did not believe she would live long, and she felt she would be forgotten, dying unloved and unknown. She did die young, but she was wrong about the other two things. When she died, she was loved by many people who knew the pure-hearted little girl inside the wild young woman; and she was not unknown. She had written three excellent novels—the last one, *Parrot Fever*, still unfortunately not published – and she would be

remembered, as she wished, as "the daughter who tried to save her father's archive" from the people who were selling it off piecemeal to collectors and dealers around the world. She wanted her father's papers preserved in a library, not sold off to the highest bidder for hard cash. That battle still goes on.

I remember her poetry, her stories, her exuberant love of life and how much she loved language, loved learning new words and new languages, loved exploring new places she had never been. I also remember her passion for justice, for the poor and outsiders. She was always railing against the American Congress and the Republican Party for cutting off monetary subsidies and welfare for the poor. She also loved all animals and was outraged at the destruction of our earthly environment. Most of all, she cared about everyone she met.



She did not play the "famous daughter," but was accessible to all, talked to everyone who came up to her, answered every letter that anyone sent her. She felt she had received a great gift in being Jack Kerouac's daughter, and she wanted to share this with the world. And, in fact, she has done so, and is still doing that through her writings and all the efforts she made to preserve the Kerouac Archive.

As her literary executor, by her instructions, I placed all of her own papers at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, where they can be studied by all future generations.



Gerald Nicosia, Jacques Kirouac and Jan Kerouac, New York, June 6, 1995  
(collection Jacques Kirouac)

# Jan Kerouac Interview

by Diane Jones

May 2, 1996

Diane Jones, an actress in the employ of an Italian film company, conducted the interview by telephone from her hotel room in San Francisco; Jan was at home in Albuquerque. This was the last interview Jan gave before falling ill and being hospitalized at Lovelace Hospital on May 10, 1996. She died after removal of her spleen on June 5.

DJ: So, we stuck you at home all night tonight?

JAN: Well, I was going to stay home anyway.

DJ: Did you watch Seinfeld?

JAN: Yeah.

DJ: Listen, I talked to Gerry about a lot of things today.<sup>2</sup> And he told me that you wanted to talk pretty much about the same things – about the Sampas family, about what's going on with your case. He pretty much brought us up to date about the actions that you've taken and the papers that you filled, and things of that nature. Can you kind of go back to the beginning and tell me how this all started?

JAN: Well, I've known Gerry for a long time, for like 20 years. I met him originally when he came up to Washington State<sup>3</sup> to interview my mother for his book, Memory Babe. I can't even remember all the details of all the things that we've done together. It's just been a long friendship. But recently – I think it was in '95<sup>4</sup> – he had suggested

a certain lawyer for me, for various reasons. We met the lawyer at this house and also the lawyer's wife, who was really nice. Tom Brill and his wife, Marta. Who his paralegal. I was sitting with Marta, just conversing and chatting. There was this huge pile of papers on the table in front of us. We had all these legal papers already out that we were just looking at. All of a sudden Marta noticed Gabrielle's will – my father's mother's will – and I looked at it too. We both looked at it and said, "Gee, that's a really strange-looking signature. That doesn't even look real." We both remarked that it looked forged. Then we called Gerry and Tom to look at it. It was just a Xerox of the will. Then we realized, Hey! This is definitely a forgery. I mean, we felt that it was. And so we looked into a handwriting analyst. He swears up and down it's a forgery. So we've got our experts. That was the beginning of the decision to sue the Sampas family for forging my grandmother's will. That's what I'm alleging that they did.

DJ: Have you taken anything to court?

JAN: The whole thing is just totally happening, as much as it possibly can be. The trouble is, The Sampases continue to file motions to dismiss, of course. Because, I believe they know



1987 — Jan Kerouac (Collection Jacques Kirouac)

what they did, and they have no excuse. But they've got millions of dollars as result, and they don't want to let go of it.

DJ: Who is helping you besides Gerry?

JAN: Well, I've got five lawyers. Herbert Jacoby in New York,

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Note <sup>1</sup> is absent in the original text.

<sup>2</sup> The Italian film crew was not able to get down to New Mexico to film Jan, so she sent them to film me in California, asking me to explain her cause and her legal case in her place. They had left my home earlier that day.

<sup>3</sup> Actually we met at Carol Ross's apartment in San Francisco the week before.

<sup>4</sup> I suggested Tom Brill to her in December, 1993, and they met at my house in January, 1994.



who's my copyright lawyer. I've got Thomas Brill, my main lawyer, but they filed some kind of stupid thing that makes him not be able to be my lawyer - I don't exactly understand how it works, but because of a conflict of interest that they dug up. They want to dig up every teeny, nitpicky thing they can think of, of course, to delay us and screw us up. So he can't speak for me now. There's another lawyer, Ray Boucher, and Nat Hines. That's basically my lawyers, right there.

DJ: How have your father's friends reacted to all this, Jan?

JAN: My father's friends? Well, unfortunately, there's a very tiny amount of true friends left. They've all gone over with the Sampases, because they're the guys with the money and the influence. Ferlinghetti is no longer my friend. Allen Ginsberg is no longer my friend, which is really tragic. Because I've known Allen Ginsberg for 35 years - more than that. I've been saying that for 5 years, so it must be 40 years now.

DJ: How has Allen reacted to this? Have you spoken to him?

JAN: Well, yeah. He was the first to know. I called him in Berlin. I found out that he was in Berlin at the time, in January of 1995<sup>5</sup>. He was my godfather, and I had lived with him and I had done Buddhism, tried to sit in the lotus position and all that. He was actually teaching me. I said, "Allen, you know, I've discovered that my grandmother's will was a forgery and I'm going to sue the Sampases." Immediately, his reaction was, "Oh, don't do that.



Janet Michelle Kerouac around 1980  
(Collection Jacques Kirouac)

That would be ugly, ugly, ugly". Those were his words, exactly. And then every time I saw him, every time until now, he's totally been sitting on the fence, not acknowledging what's happening, and totally, obviously, with the Sampases, doing all these things - his Whitney Museum exhibit and talking at NYU. And he led the audience to kick me out of NYU one time with Gerry.

DJ: Yes, I heard about that.

JAN: And also, one time, we asked him, "What do you think of the systematic selling off of your best friend Jack's archive?" He said, "Oh, I'm a Buddhist. I don't care if the world blows up tomorrow." That was his reaction.

DJ: I see.

JAN: He just turns his face, and he just won't say anything. He just says these cryptic little sayings to avoid the truth, which I think is really reprehensible, considering that Jack really

championed the truth. He is probably rolling in his grave to think that all these people who are supposedly his friends are now selling out, completely?

DJ: How do you think this battle is going to end, Jan?

JAN: I certainly hope and pray that I win. What I want to do is, I don't want to just get all the snuff that the Sampases have and keep it for myself and sell it off like they're doing. What I want to do is put it in a museum, I'm very clear about which museum that I want it to be, which is the Bancroft Library in Berkeley. And I know the curator, Tony Bliss. We've pledged it to him, because I want it to be in an archive for the public and everyone who loves Kerouac to be able to go and see. Whereas now, it's just in these hands of John Sampas and the rest of his family in Lowell, Massachusetts. They're controlling everything --- very controlling.

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<sup>5</sup> Actually 1994.



I got this idea when I was down in Key West, Florida, in '93. I was walking along, and I saw the Hemingway House. I thought, Wow! I actually went on a tour and saw it -- all of it. Everything's in its place. There are dynasties of cats that Hemingway had. I thought, How nice. Why isn't there a Kerouac house? I hadn't started the suit by then, but I was just thinking about it and thinking there really should be a house. Maybe in Lowell, or maybe in Nashua, even better. Because that's a place that Kerouac had a lot of ties and a very emotional connection with. It's where his mother and father and brother are buried?

That was a recent thing also, that I tried to get his body moved from Lowell. Did you know about that?

DJ: What's that about?

JAN: I don't think that Jack's body should be in Lowell, being desecrated every day by people who come to see the grave and leave wine bottles and candles and cigarette butts. I think it should be in St. Louis de Gonzague Cemetery in New Hampshire<sup>6</sup>, which he wrote about a lot. He even wrote about the actual cemetery. Anyway, It's all very complicated. There's a lot of press all about that, making me out to be some kind of a grave robber. You know, saying: "Kerouac's daughter wants to move writer's body to Nashua".

What happened was, this Lowell City Council, that Sampas totally rules somehow with his influence, just has a meeting without me even there or involved or anything and just decided, "We've

decided that Jan Kerouac doesn't have the right to move the body." But daughters and sons move their parents bodies all the time up there, everywhere.

DJ: Of course. I don't see why that's such a problem.

JAN: See, they feel that they own him. Body and soul, and everything. And all the things that he had, all of his archive and shoes and raincoat and everything else under the sun. I don't like their attitude. It's funny, because a lot of people tell me, "Oh, come on. Why don't you just be nice and have a settlement!" Well, sure. I would, except... they've completely trod on me. Here I am of life support, and they've taken away half my income.<sup>7</sup> I mean, I'm not about to cozy up to them after all this. They've been totally evil on me.

DJ: Jan, what do you personally have left of your dad?

JAN: Nothing. Absolutely

nothing. Just his DNA. I mean, I'm the spitting image of him.

DJ: I know. I saw the photographs today, by the way. They're lovely.

JAN: Oh, good. The very first time I met him, it was for a blood test. That was my mother's doing. She was trying to determine for the courts that I was his daughter, so that he would have to pay child support. I didn't have any hand in that. I was just excited because it was the first time I met my

<sup>6</sup> Jan's ashes were interred in St. Louis de Gonzague on June 5, 1997, but her father's body remains in the Sampas family plot in Edson Cemetery in Lowell.

<sup>7</sup> John Sampas had recently instructed agent Sterling Lord to stop paying Jan a sizable portion of the royalty income from her father that she had been receiving for the past ten years.



Jan Kerouac, Santa Monica, California, USA (photo: Marco Giovannini )  
Collection Jacques Kerouac





Laser reproduction of a photo of Jan Kerouac's mother, Joan Virginia Haverty, Jack Kerouac's second wife. (Photo taken in New York in 1950, photographer unknown)



Jan Kerouac

Photo by Gerald Nicosia, San Francisco, July 1994

father.

DJ: How did that meeting go?

JAN: Oh, it was great. It stands out in my memory like a shining beacon. Actually, I wrote about it in my book, *Baby Driver*. It made me feel like I was a real human being, to know that I had a mother and a father after all. I had always felt kind of like a freak not knowing my father, like I didn't deserve to live, or something. But I had all kinds of funny ideas about that. I took him to a liquor store, and he got a bottle of Harvey's Bristol Cream sherry. Anyway.

DJ: You met him another time after that, right?

JAN: A second time, and last time. Up in Lowell, before I went to Mexico. He was there with Stella, his nursemaid, who - I'd better not say anything because of the case. I know - and a lot of people have told me, too, who were very close to him - that he married Stella, she was a girl that he had known growing up in Lowell, all his life, kind of a plain Jane who knew and wanted to marry him. He finally married her because he needed her to take care of his mother, Gabrielle, who had a stroke and was in a wheelchair. And who, previous to the stroke, had always taken care of Jack. He was a complete mama's boy. In fact, that's part of the reason why he never acknowledged me as his daughter, because he never told his mother that I was his daughter. He was afraid to admit it, and he was very guilt-ridden about that whole thing.

DJ: How do you feel about him, Jan?

JAN: Oh, I love him. And I'm trying to restore his dignity and the family name. In fact, a whole bunch of French Canadians are coming down from Canada this October, when Gerry and I are going to Lowell again to speak.<sup>8</sup> I'm quite certain that they're going to be behind me, because there are hundreds of Kerouacs in Quebec and they don't want their name besmirched. They don't want one of their own geniuses, who started out with the French language and became a classic American writer, to be shat upon. And that's what's happening, even 27 years after his death. Even hypocrites like Allen Ginsberg, who claims to be the figurehead of the Beat Generation, or something. It's atrocious what's happening. I haven't been able to do anything, because even with five lawyers they've got the dough. They've got endless, endless money to pay... lawyers to keep the truth from coming out.

DJ: The truth as you tell it will certainly come out in this documentary.<sup>9</sup>

JAN: Oh, good.

<sup>8</sup> Lowell Corporation for the Humanities President Brad Parker had already rented the hall at Middlesex College for us to speak during Kerouac Week, since the official Kerouac Committee, closely affiliated with the Sampas family, had ignored us for the past eight years. The "whole bunch of French Canadians" she refers to, are members of l'Association des familles Kirouac, led by founding President Jacques Kirouac from Quebec City, on of Jan's closest friends at the end of her life.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the documentary they produced for the 1996 Venice Biennale film festival actually said nothing about Jan. The material about her was all cut.



Laser reproduction of a photo of Jan Kerouac with her first husband, John Lash  
(photographer unknown)  
Collection Jacques Kirouac

DJ: I don't know how much good that will do you, but it can't hurt.

JAN: No it's great.

DJ: Is there anything that you'd like to add? Is there anything we can do for you? Is there anything special that you'd like to say?

JAN: Well, I know that this new generations of X'ers or whatever you want to call them, that are coming up now, have a very uncanny affection for the Beats and for Jack Kerouac in particular. I would like to help him in leaving the legacy to them and to all people who appreciate the Beat Generation and what it signifies, and the wild, spontaneous prose that my father started, so that these evil people don't wind up just completely ruining the whole thing by stealing. It's like a stolen legacy. I might just die in the process. That's very

possible because of my condition. But even if I do so, I want to make sure that it's carried on and that my father's name is finally honoured and the whole thing goes down in history as being - that I resurrected, or helped to resurrect his dignity and his honor.

DJ: Well, Jan, I think you're on a very noble, noble cause. I wish you the best of luck with this battle and you own personal battles. I know that you aren't well, and I know that you don't have much support around you. You have a few people who are willing to help you or that can help you?

JAN: Mostly Gerry is the one who winds up helping me the most, from afar.

DJ: We'll be in touch. I'll make sure that you get a copy of this documentary in your hands. If

I may, I'd like to write you from Rome.

JAN: Oh! Great!

DJ: If there's anything that I can do, I want you to call me. I'll give you my number.

JAN: The other thing I just wanted to say is I would actually like to challenge Allen Ginsberg to announce publicly why it is that he is not helping Jack Kerouac's daughter at all, even though I've known him for 40 years and I was so close to him before. Why is this sudden turning his back on me? I just don't understand it. I'd like him to say why it is.

DJ: Jan, he is going to get a copy of this documentary too, so he'll hear your challenge.<sup>10</sup>

JAN: Okay. And you'll send me a copy of Gerry's video?<sup>11</sup>

DJ: Absolutely.

JAN: Great. I'll really look forward to seeing it.

DJ: All right. You take care of yourself, and I wish you the best of luck.

JAN: Thanks. You too.

DJ: Thank you, Jan. Thanks a lot.

### END OF INTERVIEW

Transcript revised and corrected by Jacques Kirouac, in Sainte-Foy, Quebec, Monday January 30<sup>th</sup> 2006.

<sup>10</sup> As far as I know, Ginsberg never received this interview. He died less than a year after Jan's death, on April 5, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> The interview they had just filmed with me.



## Marie-Paule Kirouac Recipient of the Crossroads Prize for 2004

*Special collaboration by Jacques Codère*

**I**t is a great pleasure to introduce an exceptional person, a terrific human being, a super woman, a person for whom going the extra-mile is normal daily routine.

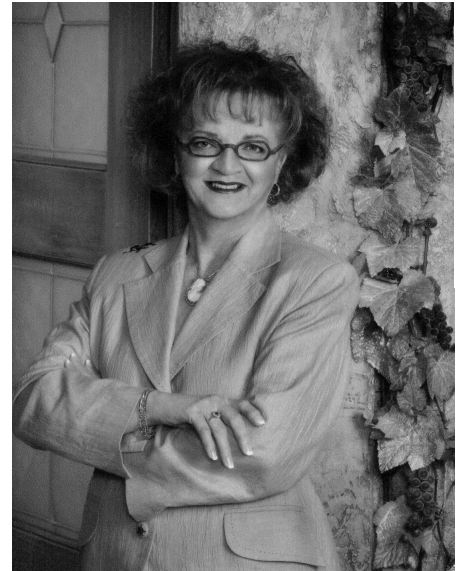
She was named Marie-Paule (02238) after her aunt Marie-Paule (02243) who entered the convent of the Augustinian Sisters years ago. When she was born (July 9, 1938), her parents as well as her grandfather Wilfrid (02226) wanted the name to be carried on in the family. She was the sixth child born to Armand Kirouac (02230) and Marie-Ange Couillard-Després in Saint-Cyrille de l'Islet.

At a very young age, she was already known to be playful, active, full of projects and, at times, mischievous. She unexpectedly started school at the age of five because her brother, Jacques, who was a year older than her was frightened at the idea of crossing the street to attend school for the first time at the Convent of the *Sisters of the Perpetuel Secours*, so to make things easier for him, she happily went along.

Having completed her primary schooling in her village, she enrolled at the convent in l'Islet-sur-Mer. She also did one year of teacher's training then went on to the *Institut Notre-Dame des Foyers* run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Vallier in Quebec City. She loved her studies at this finishing school where she learned various complementary home-related subjects and sciences. It was enriching and she embarked on a teaching career in Charlesbourg. She was married in 1960 in Sainte-Foy, Quebec, and within a few months she had to quit her teaching post because she was pregnant - in those days, that was the rule! Soon after the family moved to London, England, for two years, where her husband completed a doctorate in chemistry at London University.

She took advantage of those European years to visit Great Britain and the continent: France, Brittany - her ancestors' country, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Moscow.

She loves to evoke the Queen's invitation to a gala reception in honour of foreigners. The invitation came via the Canadian High Commission\* in London. Her visit at Buckingham Palace made a permanent impression on her and there is still nostalgia in her voice when she relates that very special social event.



Marie-Paule Kirouac

Photographer : Marc Bailey

Back in Canada in 1967, she spent the next three years in Ottawa. She remembers skiing at Camp Fortune where she witnessed and applauded Prime Minister Trudeau's ski exploits. Between 1961 and 1972 she was busy looking after the education of her two sons of whom she is very proud. Going the extra-mile is so natural to her that her children soon understood the importance of education, and long-term education. François received a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Sherbrooke (Quebec) and did his post-doctoral studies at McGill (Montreal) and Ivan obtained his doctorate in biochemistry at Cambridge University in England, followed by two years of post-doctoral studies at Harvard, USA .

# Genealogy of Marie-Paule Kirouac

## I

Urbain-François Le Bihan  
Sieur de K/voach  
Vers 1703-1736

Cap Saint-Ignace  
22 octobre 1732

Louise Bernier  
(1712-1802)

## II

Simon-Alexandre  
Keroack dit breton  
1732-1812

L'Islet-sur-Mer  
15 juin 1758

Élisabeth Chalifour  
(1739-1814)

## III

Simon-Alexandre  
Keroack dit breton  
(1760-1823)

Cap Saint-Ignace  
18 novembre 1782

Marie-Ursule Guimont  
(1765-1820)

## IV

Simon-Alexandre Keroack  
(1783-1871)

L'Islet-sur-Mer  
4 novembre 1806

Constance Cloutier  
(1789-1843)

## V

Firmin Kirouack  
(1807-1873)

L'Islet-sur-Mer  
21 octobre 1828

Marie-Marthe Lebourdais  
(????-????)

## VI

Anselme Kirouack  
(1849-1921)

Saint-Cyrille-de-Lessard  
28 janvier 1873

Domithilde Boulet  
(1855-????)

## VII

Wilfrid Kirouac  
(1876-1952)

Saint-Cyrille-de-Lessard  
8 janvier 1900

Joséphine Guimont  
(????-????)

## VIII

Armand Kirouac  
(1904-1968)

Saint-Cyrille-de-Lessard  
12 juillet 1927

Marie-Ange  
Couillard Després  
(1909-1992)

## IX

Marie-Paule Kirouac  
(1938- )

François Kirouac 12 février 2006



When her sons were in high school, Marie-Paule started teaching again. She was known as a perfectionist and for the care she put into her teaching, into passing on her knowledge to the teenagers in her classrooms so they would develop their living skills as well as their learning skills. While pursuing her teaching career, she completed her bachelor's degree then her masters in education. She also accepted a post at the Faculty of Education at the University of Sherbrooke training future teachers.

In 1991, she received the *Hilroy Scholarship* from the Canadian Teachers Federation for creating and applying novel ideas in teaching, ideas she had developed while researching and writing her Memoir for her Masters in Education.

After teaching for 26 years at the high school level and studying at the same time, in addition to being a professor at the University of Sherbrooke and a councillor for programmes and exams for the Quebec Department of Education, it was finally time to retire.

A year before quitting her teaching post, she had become involved in a new project being developed by *Caritas*, the creation of a palliative care home for people in the final phase of cancer. She put in as much efforts in fund raising for this project as well as contacting local health authorities to explain it and get it approved. After a year of steady work, she had collected \$57,000 and the project was also accepted by the Regional Health Board.

In January 1997, she was appointed Project Coordinator and, the following June, General Director. In December 1997 she became the founding Director of the *Maison Aube-Lumière* (Morning-Light House), receiving and looking after cancer patients in an advanced terminal phase. There she created an atmosphere of love, peace and serenity for which the patients and their families are most grateful. Gratitude and congratulations have been pouring in from the families who have benefited from her work at this residence.

Thanks to her talent as an organizer, her limitless imagination, her sensitivity to others, her search for perfection in the smallest details, Marie-Paule is an example of wholehearted dedication to the personnel and volunteers at the residence. The services provided by the *Maison Aube-Lumière* are highly appreciated by the families and the numerous testimonies to that effect are ample proof. For a quiet and peaceful ending to one's life, this residence is the place most in demand for terminally-ill patients.

There is no need to stress that the way the *Maison Aube-Lumière* is administered, the many contacts with various regional groups and financing activities to raise \$600,000 yearly have made Marie-Paul Kirouac a household name in Sherbrooke as well as in the Eastern Townships. As evidence she has received many testimonies of gratitude including:

In 2000, the Sherbrooke daily *La Tribune* named her: *Monthly Personality* for the Eastern Townships;

In 2000, she was named *Ambassador for Tourism* by the Society for the Economic Development of the Sherbrooke Region for organizing the Ninth Provincial Congress of the Quebec Association of Palliative Care;

In 2001, she was named *Social Builder* by the Knights of Columbus, Sherbrooke Council 530, for her work for people with cancer at the *Maison Aube-Lumière*;

In 2004, she was named *Ambassador of the Faculty of Education* at the Tenth Gala of the Outreach Programme of University of Sherbrooke;

\*The Member States of the British Commonwealth do not have an embassy in Great Britain but an Office of the High Commission.

## ERRATA

Please note the corrections to some errors in the previous Trésor:

P. 19 Presentation of Captain Joseph-Elzéar Bernier: the author is Gilles Herman and not Clément Kirouac.

P. 20 "The Two Weddings of Elmina Caron" was written by Marjolaine Saint-Pierre and not Clément Kirouac.

P. 26 In the article "Charlotte, the Globetrotter", the young seal on the photo is not a hooded seal as mentioned in the *Journal de Québec* but is in fact a Greenland seal.

The Editors apologize for these mistakes.





# Recipients of *Crossroads Humanizing Healthcare* prizes since 1988

Photographer: Francine Fauteux



Marie-Paule Kirouac at the Crossroads prize reception on November 19, 2004 with Mr. Jacques Sévigny, on the left, and of Mr. Michel Delorme on the right.

*Prix Carrefour* (Crossroad Prize) is given yearly by *Carrefour Humanisation-Santé*, i.e. *Crossroads Humanizing Healthcare*. This particular prize honours a person or a group for outstanding contribution to upgrading human and spiritual values in the health sector. The recipient must have shown great leadership in an activity, project or programme where respect of human dignity is concerned in a way that is inspirational and a model to others.

In addition, this person or group must have shown devotion and open-mindedness to others and be recognized by their peers for their exceptional work. Moreover, the recipient must have especially contributed to strengthening spiritual and human values in the health sector.

1988

**Mr. Claude Brunet**

Founding President of the *Comité provincial des maladies* (Provincial Committee for Sick-Elderly-Handicapped People).

1989

**Senator Thérèse Lavoie-Roux**

1990

**Mrs. Dolorès Bombardier**

Volunteer emeritus in the Sherbrooke area.

1991

**Senator Paul David**

1992

**Sister Bernadette Poirier**

General Superior of the Grey Nuns, Sisters of Charity of Montreal.

1993

**Mr. Pierre Bruneau**

Journalist at *Télé-Métropole* (Montreal TV station).

1994

**Mr. Paul-Antoine Ouellet**

Research and development in mental

retardation re-adaptation centres in the Mauricie Bois-Francs Regions of Quebec).

1995

**Sister Gisèle Fortier**

Franciscan Sister of Mary, Founding Member and former President of CCQS. Outstanding career in the health sector.

1996

**Sister Cécile Coulombe**

Sisters of Charity of Quebec. Outstanding career in hospital administration, St. Sacrement Hospital and in social services.

1997

**Maison Plein Cœur residence**, Montreal community organization helping people living with HIV-AIDS.

1998

**Sister Nicole Fournier**

General Director of *Accueil Bonneau* (Montreal homeless refuge since 1877).

1999

**Les Petits Frères des pauvres in Montréal** – International order of brothers committed to eliminating the social isolation of seniors.

2001

**Home service team of the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve CLSC**, Mrs. Andrée Chapleau-Lorrain and Sylvie Blais, led by Mrs. Micheline Proulx.

2002

**Les Compagnons de Montréal**

Mr. Vincent De Villers, General Director, caring for adult orphans.

2003

**Regional Pastoral Care Service**, Quebec City, Mr. Jacques Vézina, Coordinator and Project Manager.

2004

**Mrs. Marie-Paule Kirouac**

General Director *Maison Aube-Lumière*, Sherbrooke, palliative care residence for cancer patients.



# Marie-Huguette Morin Karrer

by her daughter, Pia M. (Karrer) O'Leary

Part one

In May 1906, Huguette Morin was not expected to live.

In May 2006, Marie-Huguette Morin Karrer celebrates her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!



**B**orn on May 12, 1906, a mere fourteen months after her sister Claire, M. Joséphine Huguette Morin<sup>(1)</sup> was a tiny sickly baby who could not digest anything. In fact, she was so small that she had to be carried around on a pillow. Luckily for her ... and for us ... a combination of divine and human intervention saved her life and she is now the sole survivor of the thirteen Morin children.<sup>(2)</sup>

A devout Catholic, her mother Alphonsine Côté Morin, turned to prayer and vowed that, if her baby survived, she would call her "Marie". Meanwhile her father, Victor Morin, sought the advice of his friends. The suggestion to siphon soda water through the milk before feeding it to her did the trick. From then on, she began to thrive on these milkshakes and ... to be called Marie.

But that was not the only danger she survived. Living in a bustling household with so many older siblings had its challenges. Unable to be everywhere at the same time, Alphonsine would enlist the help of all the saints in heaven in raising and watching over her ever-expanding brood. One day when things were unusually quiet, her sixth sense led her to the bathroom where Gisèle (almost four years old) and Claire (barely one and a half years old) had undressed Marie (four months) and were about to give her a 'nice' bath

in a deep tub full of water. A few years later while the parents were on a trip<sup>(3)</sup>, it was Tante Antoinette Côté<sup>(4)</sup> who discovered four-year-old Marie hidden in a closet with a match and some newspapers in her hands ... Marie remembers the ensuing spanking to this day!

Fortunately, there were always additional sets of eyes to watch over the children. The maternal grandparents, Victor Côté and Philomène LeBrice de Keroack Côté, came to live with the Morins at 1116 Saint-Denis Street after

secretary in Brother Marie-Victorin's scientific group before marrying Roger Gauthier in 1942, a botanist and professor at Université de Montréal. **Marie:** 1906-\_\_\_\_: housewife with diplomas in tourism and Italian language and culture; **Renée:** involved in adult education, publicity, active in the CCF party, author (1908-1984, 76 yrs.); **Roland:** art teacher, amateur artist and photographer (1909-1991, 81 yrs.); **Guy:** Regional Director of Blue Cross Insurance, aviator and amateur electrician (1912-1999, 87 yrs.); **Michel:** (1913-1914, 6 weeks); **Roger:** underwriter and appraiser (1915-1990, 74 yrs.).

(3) Victor loved traveling finding it the best antidote to his work as notary, and his various activities as researcher, writer, community leader, etc. Reluctantly, Alphonsine would accompany him leaving the care of her precious children in the capable hands of her sisters, Antoinette and Cécile. The Morins made several trips to the United States and Europe. They visited the Holy Land and saw the Panama Canal under construction. Victor ventured into the Abitibi region of Quebec and trekked through Northern Ontario accompanied by two guides in search of a mine.

(4) Antoinette Côté, unmarried daughter of Victor Côté and Philomène LeBrice de Keroack, came to help her sister, Alphonsine, in the large house on Saint-Urbain Street. An eye infection resulting from measles had caused her to lose the sight in one eye when she was a child. She was blessed with a magnificent voice but a death-bed promise extracted by her father prevented her from ever appearing on stage. Fortunately, she was invited to accompany a friend to France where she had the opportunity to further her study of music and observe the family's excellent chef. So, years later, she combined giving private voice lessons while supervising the kitchen in the Morin household.

(1) She was baptized M. Joséphine Huguette Morin at St-Jean Baptiste Parish in Montréal on May 14, 1906. Her god-father was the famous artist-architect Napoléon Bourassa (see various English websites about this great artist 1827-1916), a friend of the family and Alphonsine's art teacher. Her godmother was Joséphine Sarasin, Alphonsine's good friend and confidante. At that time most girls were given Marie as a first name at baptism (this usually appeared as M. in the register). It did not mean that the child would be called Marie. In the case of Marie Karrer, her given name Huguette was replaced by Marie in thanksgiving for her miraculous survival.

(2) **Lucien:** notary (solicitor) (1894-2000, 106 yrs.), son of Fannie Côté, a Franco-American, Victor Morin's first wife who died a few days after giving birth to her son; **Réginald:** President and General Director of *Industrial Valuation Company* (1897-1939, 42 yrs.); **Simone:** (1899-1911, 12 yrs.); **Marc:** pharmacist-chemist (1900-1986, 85 yrs.); **Pol-André:** lawyer (1902-1940, 38 yrs.); **Gisèle:** housewife and patron of the arts (1903-1996, 93 yrs.); **Claire:** (1905-1994, (88 yrs.). Degree (LSc) in Botany and Library Science;



they had lost everything in a fire in Saint-Hyacinthe. When the family moved to an even bigger home at 703 Saint-Urbain Street<sup>(5)</sup>, Alphonsine's two maiden sisters, Antoinette and Cécile Côté, moved in to help her run the household. Antoinette, a gifted singer and music teacher, oversaw the kitchen while Cécile looked after the garden, supervised the handyman and ran all the errands. In addition to the handyman, there were maids to help with the cooking, cleaning and laundry. When Alphonsine accompanied her husband on a six-month trip to Europe and the Holy Land, she even hired a cousin who was a registered nurse to look after the children.

Concern for the safety of her children was the reason why Alphonsine did not want a summer home near a body of water. Therefore the Morins bought a former apple orchard on the slopes of Mont-Bruno<sup>(6)</sup>. The sun, exercise, and fresh produce were excellent for building strong bodies. Unfortunately, the parents had neglected to take into account the vivid imagination and mischievousness of the older children which proved to be the

greatest hazard of all!

Eager to win the respect of their older brothers, Réginald and Marc, Marie and all the other younger siblings would gladly accept their challenges to prove their spunk and bravery. Marie would let them drag her by the hair all the while pretending that it did not hurt. (Fortunately, this treatment did not cause her any hair loss. She still sports a full head of hair which is the envy of her three grandsons.).

Initiation into Marc's *army* involved finding and destroying a wasps' nest and not complaining about the many stings. In fact the more stings you had, the higher your *rank* would be. One day the farm hand caught Marc about to roll a wagon wheel down the steep slope with Marie tied to it like Saint Catherine during her martyrdom. Another day, when the four little girls had climbed bare-back on a horse, Marc threw a stone at the horse ... the horse reared and bolted ... Marie, sitting behind the others on the horse, fell backwards and head first to the ground.

However, probably the most potentially lethal activity occurred in Réginald's personal laboratory which he called *ELECTRICA*. For the privilege of being allowed to enter, the children had to hold on to metal bars while he ran an electrical current through it, thus through his younger siblings. Marie remembers being unable to cry out or let go of the bars while the current was flowing ... it still sends shivers down her spine as she considers the possibility that she and all her siblings might have been wiped out in an instant. Unbeknownst to Alphonsine, who was probably



Alphonsine Côté, daughter of Victor Côté and Philomène Aurélie LeBrice de Keroack (1946 Passport photo).

Collection Pia M. Karrer O'Leary.



Victor Morin, husband of Alphonsine Côté and father of Marie Huguette Morin Karrer. (1946 Passport photo).

Collection Pia M. Karrer O'Leary.

busy with the latest addition to her family, her prayers were constantly answered for it was truly a miracle that the Morin children survived their youth!<sup>(7)</sup>

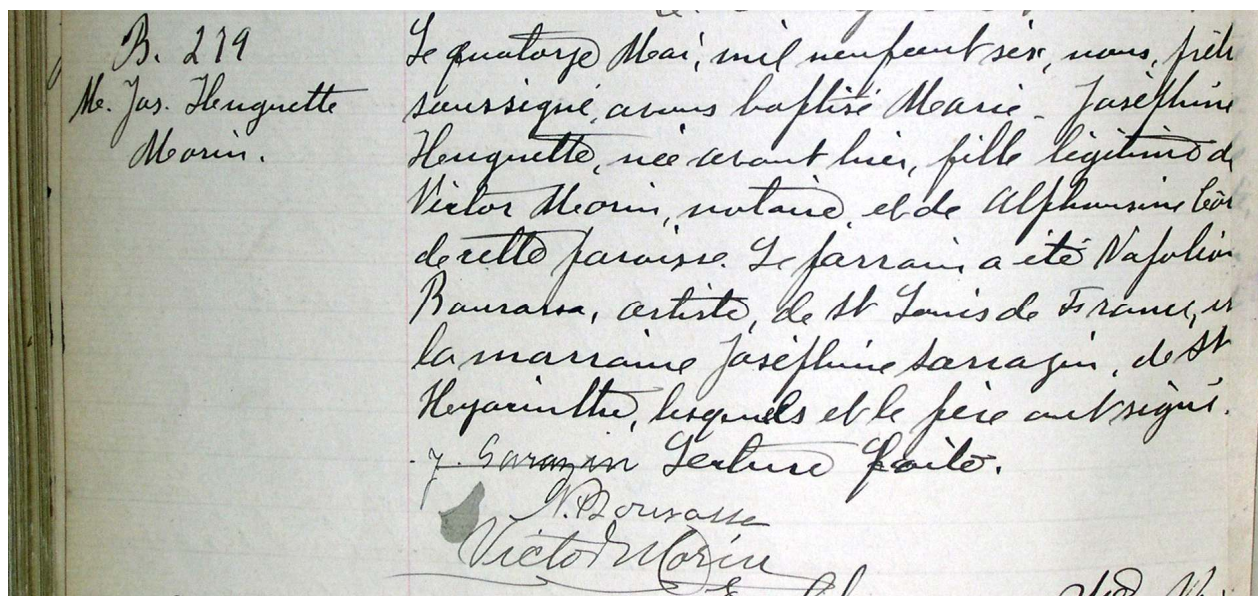
Respite came during the school year when the older boys were sent to boarding schools while the four girls were home-taught by a French governess except for the occasional stay in a convent while preparing to receive the various sacraments of the Church. This arrangement

5) From 1902 to 1911, the Morins lived at 1116 Saint-Denis Street in Montreal between Marie-Anne and Mont-Royal Streets. From 1911 to 1952 they lived at 703 (which became 3585) Saint-Urbain Street near Prince-Arthur Street.

(6) Mont-Bruno: Across the River from Montreal, on the South Shore.  
<http://www.lilbean.com/parksearch/parks/html/1658l1t.htm>

(7) Simone died of measles and typhoid at the age of twelve, while Michel died of newborn's dysentery only six weeks old. Amazingly enough, Claire's broken arm and Renée's broken leg were the only serious accidents to befall any of the Morin Children as they were growing up. They even managed to avoid the ravages of the Spanish Flu at the end of the First World War by retreating to their country home.





Baptismal record of M. Joséphine Huguette Morin, dated May 14, 1906 (Collection Pia Karrer O'Leary)

caused much envy among the older brothers some of whom were often 'ill' in order to stay home. Tutors were hired for them but to no avail. Instead of studying, they disrupted the girls' class or amused themselves by creating general mayhem. The three younger boys did not go to boarding school as they attended the Académie Saint-Urbain across the street from the Morin home.

Discipline was meted out at the end of the day by the father upon returning from his office. Marie recalls witnessing a few memorable public spankings. Unfortunately, many misdemeanors were never punished given the protective nature of Alphonsine compounded by the mischievous nature of Victor who delighted in his sons' pranks.

Relations between the older brothers and their younger sisters improved with time. As young adults they enjoyed hosting parties together. Each invited a few friends and fun was had by all. Because of its proximity to Mount-Royal Park, the Morin home on Saint-Urbain Street with its huge living-room and excellent midnight snacks became

the *after-ski* headquarters for their ski club: *Club Chic Chac*. Their parents liked the arrangement. Victor would often join in the fun while Alphonsine was relieved to know where the children were and with whom they were associating. Even Tante Antoinette did not seem to mind spending all evening preparing a full meal complete with soup, meat and dessert for the hungry crowd. The time the Morin children spent together created a bond between them which lasted their lifetime and which continues to this day among their descendants.

Obviously the Morins were a very welcoming family. Every day, Antoinette would prepare a supply of hearty sandwiches for the *quêteux* (beggars) who knew where to come knocking around lunch time. When the inter-provincial exchanges began in the 1930's, the Morins were one of the first host families in Quebec. Sir Ernest<sup>(8)</sup> MacMillan's son and George Grant, the future philosopher, came as teenagers to learn French in the Morin home. Marie's helpfulness would later be acknowledged in George Grant's biography<sup>(9)</sup>. It was also with open arms that the Morins

welcomed back their grown children in need. They sheltered all five members of Réginald's family in the aftermath of the Crash of 1929 and later raised his children, Jacques-Victor, Magdelaine and Pierre, after their parents' death. They also took in Marie and her daughter, Pia, back from Italy, after the Second World War.

Having been brought up in a warm and caring home, it was natural for Marie to volunteer in her community. For years, she was in charge of dispensing nutritional supplements in a shelter for expectant and new mothers. She also earned a diploma in tourism from the University of Montreal and volunteered as a tour guide for the city of Montreal.

Like her parents<sup>(10)</sup> Marie enjoyed sports and a healthy lifestyle. She skied, rode horses, played tennis and learned to swim at the *Palestre*

(8) Sir Ernest MacMillan was the conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

(9) "That summer was very happy for me and particularly because a Morin daughter, Marie-Huguette, arranged how I spent the day." CHRISTIAN, William, *George Grant: a Biography*, University of Toronto Press 1993, p. 34 and note 61, p.381.





Carlo Karrer in Italy's Royal Army  
(collection Pia Karrer)

*nationale*. Never having had a car and being used to keeping up to her husband's military stride, she walked briskly and never seemed to get tired. At the age of eighty-three, she would walk up four flights of stairs to her apartment several times a day often carrying her groceries. At ninety, she moved to London, Ontario, by herself on the train. When she was ninety-two, she was diagnosed with a small cancerous lump in her breast. At her pre-operation appointment she compensated for the missing step-stool by jumping backwards onto the examination table much



The Morin children in front of their summer home in Mont-Bruno (Lucien, Réginald, Simone, Marc, Pol-André, Gisèle, Claire, Marie-Huguette, Renée)  
(Collection Pia M. Karrer O'Leary)

to the amazement of the nurses. Word got around, all the nurses wanted to see it. She obliged them all by repeating the maneuver. At the time, she did not know that she was suffering from osteoporosis. Within two weeks, as she was helping a neighbour pull a shopping cart up an incline, she suffered a compression fracture of four vertebrae and lost four inches in height in one day. The intense pain she suffered and the medications she took in order to control that pain affected her ability to live alone. At the age of ninety-six she had to leave her apartment to live in a nursing home where, with the help of a walker, she can still outpace her much younger neighbours. She attributes her good health to the summers spent in the country, to the good food that Tante Antoinette prepared and, of course, to the genetic inheritance passed on by her parents.

From her father she also inherited an innate curiosity characterized by a love of learning and traveling. All her adult life she continued his research on the Morin and Keroack genealogies<sup>(11)</sup>. She learned Italian and won the Canadian scholarship to study at the Università per Stranieri in Perugia (see *Le Trésor*, March 2005, for the complete story of her years in Italy). Alone, she visited Europe and took advantage of her steamer's port of calls to visit various cities in North Africa. In 1939, she married Carlo Karrer, an Italian army officer, and spent the war years in Italy. Later she followed her husband to Toronto, Boston, Binghamton and the New York City area.

Everywhere she went, she always enjoyed discovering a new region and making new friends. Although she now leads a sedentary life, she continues her voyage of discovery by reading every day.

(10) ~~Victor played polo and tennis, loved hiking~~ and walked to and from work morning, noon and evening. Alphonsine was a talented figure skater.

(11) "Marie-Huguette Morin Karrer, who had inherited her father's love of research, began researching her family's genealogy at the age of eighteen. It is incredible that she was able to keep her notes and persevere with this project despite her many moves. Over the years, she continued writing to the various parishes in order to acquire the necessary baptism, marriage and burial certificates of her ancestors (...) After Carlo's death, she settled in Château Vincent d'Indy, a retirement home, where she could have more time to devote to her research. All she had was a bed-sitting room. Every day she would organize her notes on her bed only to have to pack everything up in plastic bags at bed-time. When she moved to London in 1996, Pia bought her a filing cabinet and helped her sort out the various documents. In doing so, the genealogical 'bug' was transmitted to Pia!

"From 2000 to 2003, after retiring and acquiring a new computer, I (Pia O'Leary) reduced the contents of a filing cabinet into a book that would be more easily accessible for the whole family. The whole process was under the watchful eye of (my mother) Marie, who checked and corrected all the proofs at the age of 96!" Pia O'Leary (loosely translated from the *Preamble* to the Morin genealogy dated May 15, 2003).



# in memoriam

## **BEAULIEU, LISE**

At the Saint-Antoine Residence in Quebec City, on January 1, 2006, passed away Mrs. Lise Beaulieu, daughter of the late Henri Beaulieu and the late Micheline Verret. She leaves to mourn her husband, Jean-Pierre Kirouac (02296), her daughters: Francine (André Blais), Ginette (Marco Ledoux), Suzanne (Marco Lachance), her grandsons: Tomy, Almeric and Zachary, her sister and brothers: Huguette, Guy and Gilles. Liturgy of the Word was celebrated on January 4, 2006, Memorial Park La Souvenance in Sainte-Foy, Quebec.

## **GOUGEON LUSSIER, FRANÇOISE**

On Thursday, January 19, at the age of 87, passed away Mrs. Françoise Gougeon Lussier, wife of the late Jacques A. Lussier. She was the daughter of the late J. Alphonse Gougeon and the late Antonia Boulet. She leaves to mourn, her daughter Marie (Brian Timperley and his two daughters, Marie-José and Maxine) her son, Laurent (Patricia Gobeille), her grandchildren: Alexandre (Susan Sheard), Patrick (Isabelle Charest), Catherine (Morten Lefsaker), Claire (Alexis Renaud) and Paul as well as four great-grandchildren: Mia and Julianne Lussier (Patrick's daughters), Thomas and Ida Lefsaker. Funeral Mass in the presence of the ashes took place on Thursday, January 26, 2006, at 10:30 a.m., in the Resurrection Chapel in Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery where burial will take place in the spring in the Gougeon family lot.

## **HURTUBISE, MARTHE**

At the Manoir Saint-Joseph in Montreal, on September 22, 2005, at the age of 88, passed away Mrs. Marthe Hurtubise, daughter of the late Alfred Hurtubise and the late Marie Germaine Kirouac (00842). She was the wife of the late Henri St-Pierre and the late Benoît Clermont. Funerals were held in Saint-Mathieu Church in Montreal on September, 26, 2005; burial at Repos St-François d'Asisse Cemetery. She leaves to mourn her sisters: Gabrielle, Monique, Claire and Huguette and her brothers: Gilles, Bernard and Robert.

## **KIROUAC, JOSETTE**

At the Michel Sarrazin Residence in Quebec City, on February 9, 2006, passed away Mrs. Josette Kirouac, daughter of the late Henri Kirouac (02091) and the late Simonne Tanguay. Funeral service was held on February 13, 2006 in Notre-Dame de Vanier church in Quebec City and burial was at Saint-Charles Cemetery. She leaves to mourn her mother, her sisters and brother: Jocelyne, Yves (Jo Anne Lantin), Sylvie (Richard Fortier), her nephew, Christian Fortier (Karine Goulet), her niece, Valérie Kirouac (Vincent Chouinard).

## **KIROUAC PAQUET, JACQUELINE**

At Laval Hospital in Quebec City, on January 23, 2006, aged 76, passed away Mrs. Jacqueline Kirouac Paquet (01180), wife of Mr. Maurice Paquet. Funerals were on Friday, January 27, 2006 in Saint-François-Xavier church in Duberger, Quebec. The ashes will be deposited in

the Mausoleum in Saint-Charles Cemetery in Quebec City. She leaves to mourn, her husband, her children: Gaétane, Carole (Christian) Guy (Josée), Jean (Mona), Guylaine (Roger), Pierre (Doris) and many grandchildren.

## **LECLERC, MARIE**

At the St-Brigid's Home in Quebec City, on December 6, 2005, aged 97, passed away Mrs. Marie Leclerc, daughter of the late Vénérand Leclerc and the late Anna Lessard. Mrs. Leclerc was the last governess of Abbé Jules Adrien Kirouac at the manse in Sainte-Justine before he retired in Saint-Damien. Funeral service was held on Saturday, December 10, 2005, in Saint-Charles-Garnier Church in Quebec City and burial will be in the spring in Sainte-Justine Cemetery. She leaves to mourn her sister Marie-Ange (the late Georges Lafrance), her brother-in-law, Jacques Ruel (the late Agathe Leclerc) as well as many nephews, nieces and friends.

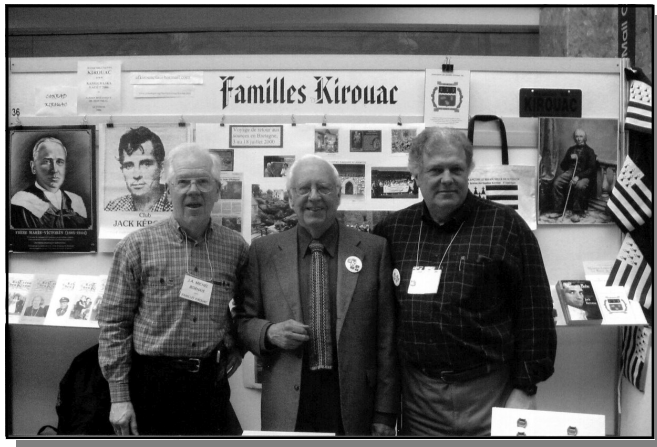
## **LÉVESQUE, ADRIEN**

At the Residence Les doux Souvenirs in Rivière-du-Loup, on December 27, 2005, aged 99 years and two months, passed away Abbé Adrien Lévesque, son of the late Joseph Lévesque and the late Alice Kirouac (01569). Funeral service was on Friday, December 30, 2005, in Saint-Ludger church in Rivière-du-Loup. Burial was in Saint-François-Xavier Cemetery. He leaves to mourn his sister, Angéline r.e.j., her sister-in-law, Marie-Paule Ouellet and members of the Lévesque and Kirouac families.





# ORIGINAL FAMILIES FAIR PLACE LAURIER, SAINTE-FOY, QUÉBEC FEBRUARY 24 - 26, 2006



From left to right: Michel Bornais, Jacques Kirouac and Robert Kirouac (Photo: courtesy of the Fédération des familles souches québécoises inc.)



Marie and Lucille Kirouac (Photo: François Kirouac)



François Kirouac (Photo : Marie Kirouac)



Marie Kirouac, Céline Kirouac and Michel Bornais (Photo: François Kirouac)



# ONE BRANCH OF THE K/VOACH TREE

## From Eastern Quebec to Western Canada and south of the border to the States...

by Clément Kirouac

This is the first of three articles. Eight mysterious photos once published in *Le Trésor des Kirouac*<sup>(1)</sup> sparked a light in my memory. Thanks to a friendship begun in 1998 and developed over the years with Mrs. Marie-Huguette Morin-Karrer and with her good friend, Mrs. Françoise Lussier, the links of these two families with St. Hyacinthe (Quebec) eventually attracted my attention; added to that the wonderful sepia photographs in Raymonde Kéroack-Harvey's 1980 *L'ALBUM*, enough to motivate the researcher in me.

This being said, the task would have been arduous if not for the essential help of Marie Lussier, a busy-bee who has added to the knowledge of our family by keeping in touch with our American cousins who are now very happy to better understand the content of *Le Trésor*. Perfectly bilingual, nothing escapes her grasp of genealogical subtleties.

One thing to remember is that Marie Lussier-Timperley, daughter of Mrs. Françoise Lussier, hails from St. Hyacinthe through her great-grandfather Camille Lussier, the husband of Marie-Anne-Solange-Domithilde Le Brice de Keroack. It is the great-granddaughter who pricked my curiosity and awoke the desire to explore the Maskoutain<sup>(2)</sup> links which are likely to surprise many. In the December 2003 *Trésor*<sup>(3)</sup> Marie explained her attraction by asking the question: "Why be interested in one great-grandmother more than the others?" The name of course sounded so romantic and added to it the 'nobility' legend, to which her father referred to with great pride ... She concluded with: "The Keroack daughters married very well indeed –

more fascinating stories for future *Trésors*."

I take great pleasure in thanking Marie Lussier for her help in studying and understanding the matter, as well for her help in writing the three articles you will be reading this year. Is it destiny? As I write this, I heard of the passing of Mrs. Françoise Lussier, née Gougeon. In 1976, just one year after the sudden death of her husband, she married genealogy! This alliance lasted for twenty-two years and produced, without the help of computers then, 15,000 hand-written pages, one per Lussier wedding since the arrival of the ancestor in 1664 until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; add to this the extra files concerning all the connecting branches, including the Keroack one of course. Before the first memorable family Kirouac gathering in L'Islet-sur-Mer in 1980, and the publication of Raymonde Kéroack-Harvey's *L'Album*, Françoise answered the request published in the newspapers for information and photos about the Kirouacs.

Here I wish to pay a very sincere homage to this great lady who did so much for the genealogy of her family and ours in particular. The Kirouacs owe Mrs. Françoise the information that is the basis of the present research. Her daughter, Marie, will certainly follow up in her footsteps.

The Kirouacs from Quebec City and Warwick have received great visibility through the years for various and obvious reasons. But during that time what was happening in the Montérégie (on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River opposite Montreal). When consulting the Genealogy prepared by François Kirouac and published in 1991, one can see that there were numerous

Kirouacs in the Montérégie region. Could it be the Richelieu River and Valley that were attracting so many from the Côte-du-Sud? In the following three *Trésors* you will have some rather interesting pages to read and you can also expect some surprises.

### The Old Photo Album from Montmagny

An old photo album forgotten in an attic in the Lower-Saint-Lawrence region held a secret wrapped in mystery within a rather intriguing name under one of the photos. **Comtesse Lebrice de Kéroack**, nothing less! Who could this lovely lady be with her Mona Lisa look, dressed in the 19th century fashion? *Lebrice*, we know about this name and all the other photos bore the name *de Kéroack*. But a *Countess*? Time and need for an investigation.

Do you remember that in the September 2002, *Le Trésor* published a set of eight photos asking the readers to identify them, if at all possible, in order to find out who were these eight 19th century Kéroacks? Why at that time? Obviously because of the way they were dressed. No one came up with anything and all was forgotten ... until the spring of 2005.

These photos were given to me by Abbé Roland Provost from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. They used to belong to Mrs. Esther L'Espérance, née Sasseville, from Montmagny. I still do not know why this unknown lady had this album. These people on the photos made quite an impression, as much by their clothes as by their attitude. They were all called 'Kéroack', including the 'Comtesse'. So the questions arising are: what are the links between them

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(1) *Le Trésor des Kirouac*, no. 69, September 2002, pp. 40-41.

(2) Maskoutain, name given to St. Hyacinthe's inhabitants as they live by the Yamaska River.

(3) *Le Trésor des Kirouac*, no. 74, December 2003, p. 20.



# The Unbeatable Le Brice de Keroack

## The “noble” branch from the Montérégie Region from 1836 to 1905



**Charles Lebrice de Kérouack**  
1768-1837



**Louis Kérouack**  
Marriage in 1841  
+ Adeline Blais



**Henriette Kérouack**  
Born in 1811: Religious?



**Léon-Solyme Lebrice  
de Kérouack**  
1805-1880



**Aimé-Maximilien.**  
Kérouack : Léon-Solyme  
1839-1899



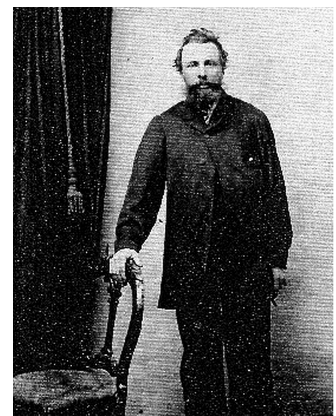
**Éléonore Kérouack**  
Spouse of O.-N. Beaudry?  
St-Guillaume?



**Malvina Gauthier**  
+ to Maximilien-Aimé  
Marriage in 1871



**Alphonse-Marcellin**  
Kérouack : Léon-Solyme  
1845-1905



**Léon (Napoléon)?**  
Born in 1861 in Henryville  
United States



and where do they fit on the family tree?

Well, by deduction and considering the dates, the 'Comtesse' gave us the first clue. But not just the dates ... Her title and her noble stance directed us towards a surprise box, but its content is for the next *Trésor* in June. Ah the pleasures of genealogical discoveries and so much more as well!

For the time being, I will identify the portraits and, perhaps, tickle your perspicacity. The initials were most helpful to discover who the "Doctor" A.M. Kérouack was. Doctor? Let's say a well-educated gentleman where he lived. He is Aimé-Maximilien Kérouack from St. Hyacinthe (01211)<sup>(4)</sup>, son of Léon-Solyme Le Brice de Kérouack (01208), schoolmaster in St-Charles-sur-Richelieu. That is why to the group of eight I added his photograph that was already published in *l'Album*<sup>(5)</sup> of Raymonde Kérouac-Harvey.

Then there is this very distinguished gentleman, named Alphonse ... could it be Alphonse-Marcellin (01258)<sup>(6)</sup>, another son of the schoolmaster Léon-Solyme? I think that Sherlock Holmes would have enjoyed this search very much. So, a father and his two sons and then, why not a grandfather?

Charles Kérouac (01195), Léon-Solyme's father, was born in 1768 in St-Pierre-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud. On October 12, 1836, he left St-Pierre-de-Montmagny and moved to the parish of St. Georges in Henryville where he died six months later<sup>(7)</sup>.

As we are not playing musical chairs, I had to find a place for the 'Countess'. Given that I intend to really surprise one and all in the June *Trésor*, I will simply peremptorily say that the beautiful Countess Le Brice de Kérouack was the wife of no other than Aimé-Maximilien Le Brice de Kérouack, a well-to-do-merchant of St. Hyacinthe. She was born Malvina Gauthier from St-Pie-de-Bagot, where she married her

handsome Count Aimé-Maximilien, aged 32, and a businessman from St. Hyacinthe. Eleven children were born to this couple, first in Quebec and later in Manitoba.

Now what about this photo of Louis Kérouack (00029), 77 years old, that puzzled me for a long time? He has the proud look of a great man! Like Charles, his great-uncle, he also moved to Henryville, by the Richelieu River. He and his wife Adeline Blais<sup>(8)</sup> also had a large family. Later on, his eldest son, Aimé, immigrated to the United States. Interesting to note that he was called Aimé, this Christian name comes back generation after generation. Even today, Aimé-Michel from Dorval, Quebec, is a grandson of Aimé-Maximilien. Was it a predestined Christian name within the Le Brice de Kérouack clan? Future will tell ...

There were three more photographs to be identified and that was even more difficult. We are almost certain but not one hundred percent. The lady with the white veil could be Henriette Kérouack (01189), born in 1811 in St-François-de-Montmagny, she would have become a nun<sup>(9)</sup>. The lady with the white bonnet, called Éléonore Kérouack (00014), could possibly be the wife of Olivier-Nazaire Beaudry, buried in St-Guillaume-de-Bagot. Finally Léon, why not short for Napoléon, this seems to be a frequent occurrence? I think that this Léon was in fact Napoléon Kérouack (00062), son of Louis, born in Henryville who died in Connecticut.

I would be most grateful if someone could use an eye-glass to re-examine over my shoulder the identity of these last three photographs ... This long search process was helpful in understanding the central role played by Léon-Solyme Le Brice de Kérouack<sup>(10)</sup>, the extra photo I added to the group of eight. In my next articles, it will be possible to discover the importance of the respectable schoolmaster of St-

Charles-sur-Richelieu. Do any of you, reading this article, know that Léon-Solyme is the only member of our K/ clan to be included in the *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada* (Canadian Biographical Dictionary)? Below is the translation of the integral text written by Louis-Philippe Audet, as well as the author's references.

### KÉROUAC (Kirouac), LÉON

*Schoolmaster, born in Saint-François-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud (County of Montmagny) in 1805, son of Charles de Kérouac and Josephite Blanchette; on April 11, 1836, in St. Marc, County of Verchères, he married Éléonore Létourneau; he died in Montreal on February 21, 1880.*

*Léon Kérouac was schoolmaster in Saint-Antoine-sur-Richelieu. On July 23, 1845, he was elected president of the Teachers Association of the District of Montréal (Beloeil Section). On August 7, 1845, La Minerve<sup>(11)</sup> underlined the importance of this association and Doctor Jean-*

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(4) Number in brackets refers to the *Généalogie des descendants* published in 1991, François Kirouac.

(5) Raymonde Kérouac-Harvey, *L'ALBUM*, page 70.

(6) Father of Lucien-Fernand, architect, Art Deco specialist.

(7) François Kirouac, *op. cit.* page 338.

(8) François Kirouac, *op. cit.* page 153.

(9) François Kirouac, *op. cit.* page 336, under the name of Sister Sainte-Philomène.

(10) Note: the eight photos were labelled Kérouack. For the rest of the text, the spelling Kérouack will be used as it is still the way it is spelled by the descendants of that branch of the family. Kérouac is the spelling used in *The Dictionnaire biographique*.

(11) *La Minerve*, liberal political newspaper of the Patriots Party founded in 1826.



Photo Jacques Fiset

Maximilien-Aimé  
LeBrice de Kéroack

Baptiste Meilleur greatly praised it in his Memorandum on Education in Lower-Canada. For many years, Kéroutac devoted himself to the education of the youth in the Richelieu Valley. On March 4, 1857, during a banquet attended by professors from the Jacques-Cartier Teachers Training School in Montreal, the Superintendent, Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau<sup>(12)</sup> had him seated next to him because he considered him the dean of the educators present; he was only 52 years old!

On August 28, 1857, Léon Kéroutac became a member of the Teachers Association for the District of Jacques-Cartier Teachers Training School. The superintendent had greatly encouraged the setting-up of these associations in regard with the Jacques-Cartier (or Laval) Teachers Training School. They would meet at least four times a year at the Teachers Training School to discuss essentially education questions and teachers were invited to present lectures on methodology, pedagogy, psychology and teaching methods. Administrative problems pertaining to the well-being of the teachers were also discussed. The *Journal de l'instruction publique* (Public Education Journal) would faithfully publish the Minutes of these meetings.

The 1857 *Journal de l'instruction publique* mentioned that, for the past nine years, Kéroutac had been contributing to the teachers' pension

funds £1 per year. In 1856, A law authorized the Superintendent to include in his budget "an amount not exceeding 500 louis to help build a fund for the help of Lower Canada public school teachers when they become too old or exhausted by work, of course said tired and retired teachers would benefit from this fund on the condition that they had contributed one louis per year". This contribution was optional and many schoolteachers, alleging their poor wages, did not contribute to the pension fund. Many times, Chauveau complained about the teachers' indifference to the pension fund.

Kéroutac was then considered as a highly experienced schoolmaster, very dedicated to his profession, conscientious, carrying out the duties and responsibilities required by the education laws, and the educators' leader<sup>(13)</sup>.

Amazing, is it not that such a man, so important, one of ours and so little known within our family who loves achievers and successful people. Restore a reputation, is this not true nobility? Let's see what else there is.

#### Like Father, Like Son ...

Léon-Solyme and Éléonore Létourneau must have been very proud of their eight children, five daughters and three sons. The names of some of them are known to us because of their unions and their better-known descendants. I am thinking of Philomène-Aurélie,

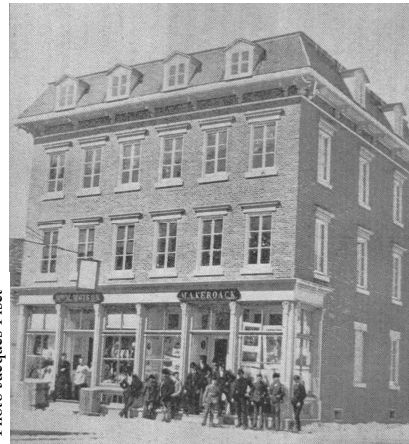


Photo Jacques Fiset

Bookstore of Maximilien-Aimé

Marie-Anne-Domithilde, Aimé-Maximilien and Alphonse-Marcellin. Even if these names will be mentioned later on, for the time being I want to talk about Aimé-Maximilien, the "beloved son" of Léon and Éléonore. His story will later confirm all the blessings his name included.

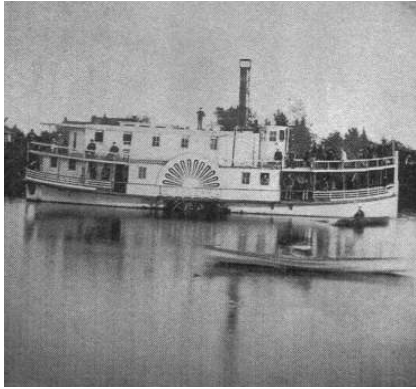
Aimé-Maximilien was born on April 30, 1839, in Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu. After his elementary schooling, he did his classical studies at the Saint-Hyacinthe College (Seminary). It is important to know that, in those days, the town was an extremely important intellectual and political hub. I will come back to this aspect in a later article. Having a schoolmaster as father, Aimé had to study and did very well. Could it be for that reason that he is identified as Doctor on the photograph?

I am inclined to believe that he studied art (possibly architecture). The archives in St. Hyacinthe indicate that in 1875 in a small ad, he offered his services in the following terms: "I am available to supervise plans and specifications for the constructions of churches, houses and other buildings." On a Web page about Thomas Bernier, cousin of Aimé Keroack, some interesting facts are listed concerning one of his works. One can read that the Bernier House, built in 1882 in St. Boniface, Manitoba, now classified as an historical site, was designed and built by Aimé de Keroack. Elegant in

(12) Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau, (1820-1890) Lawyer, First Premier of the Province of Quebec after Confederation. See Website: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre\\_Chauveau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Chauveau)

(13) AJM, *Registre d'état civil* (biographical notes supplied by J.-J. Lefebvre).- JIP, March 1857, 71; August 1857, 163; Sept. 1857, 187.- J.-B. Meilleur, *Mémorial de l'éducation du Bas-Canada* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Québec, 1876), 280-282.- *La Minerve* (Montreal), August 7, 1845.- L.-P. Audet, P.-J.-O. Chauveau, Quebec Minister of Public Education, 1867-1873, MSRC, 4<sup>o</sup> sér., V (1967), sect. i: 171-184.





Aimé-Maximilien's Steamboat  
Photo by Jacques Fiset

style, the eighteen-room house was considered one of the first social, intellectual and political centres of St. Boniface-Winnipeg area where Aimé was known as the librarian and not as an architect or builder.

In 1860, he owned the Keroack Book Shop on Cascades Street, at the corner of Sainte-Anne Street, next door to *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, the local daily. A contemporary document describes the building as: Establishment selling books, stationery, holy images, religious objects, school and office supplies, fancy items, gifts, frames of all kinds and wallpaper.”<sup>(14)</sup>

In 1868, the young enterprising businessman bought a magnificent steamboat in Montreal. He had it transported to St. Hyacinthe and refitted there; she was launched on the Yamaska River on September 10, 1869. Abbé Lecours, Curate of Notre-Dame Parish, blessed the boat; hence she was named Notre-Dame. Aimé Keroack was the first one to ring the ship's bell and place his offering, followed by the godfathers and godmothers. Finally, Mr. Jacques-Hyacinthe-Simon Delorme, second Seigneur of St. Hyacinthe, invited the spectators to ring her bell and also contribute to Mr. Keroack's expenses, this very devoted businessman who was providing the town with such a magnificent ship.

While the crowd gathered around the ship's bell, the town's music band (*L'Harmonie de Saint-Hyacinthe*) played to everyone's delight. Finally,

the ship set sail to the crowd's cheers and disappeared majestically on the Yamaska River, carrying with her about sixty VIPs, leaving behind on the pier some 4000 people who had come to see the Notre-Dame's first departure. This memorable event brought in the large sum of \$200. During four years, she sailed between St. Césaire, St. Pie and St. Hyacinthe. Unfortunately, in 1873, due to financial difficulties, Mr. Keroack had to give her up by way of a lottery to benefit the construction of the Convent of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary in St. Hyacinthe. Before the sale of tickets was completed, on May 1873, a fire destroyed the ship while berthing at the foot of Choquette Street.

On May 23, 1871, in Saint-Pie-de-Bagot, at the age of 32, Aimé married Malvina Gauthier, daughter of André Gauthier and Héloïse Fauteux. About the same time, Aimé Keroack was offered the post of secretary of the *Institut des Artisans de Saint-Hyacinthe*. The following year, with thirty-five town personalities, he attended the banquet in honour of Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier. On September 1874, with Mr. Camille Lussier, owner/editor of the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*<sup>(15)</sup>, he introduced the great Louis Riel, when he visited the Saint-Hyacinthe Seminary. Interesting collaboration between the bookseller and the local newspaper editor, who were after all brothers-in-law, as Camille Lussier had married Aimé-Maximilien's sister, Marie, on January 27, 1864, in the St. Hyacinthe Cathedral.

On September 3, 1876, another disaster befell the enterprising businessman. A major fire destroyed most of the centre of town, and the bookshop went up in smoke. This was one calamity too many; Aimé Keroack who already had three children, left St. Hyacinthe for St. Boniface, where he opened a bookshop, the first French bookshop in Western Canada. Aimé-Maximilien Le Brice de Keroack

died on January 3, 1899. A solemn funeral was held in the St. Boniface Cathedral.

In the centre of St. Hyacinthe, near the City Hall, there is the *Avenue Kérouack*, named after its honourable citizen Aimé-Maximilien. Perhaps, one day the City toponymy committee will change the spelling of the name to reflect the way Aimé-Maximilien wrote his name and his descendants still write it to this day: Keroack.

Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Jacques Fiset from St. Hyacinthe, the author of a book published in October 2005, entitled *D'une rue à l'autre à St-Hyacinthe* (literal translation: *From one street to the other in St. Hyacinthe*) in which there is a page about the Kérouack Avenue.



Kérouack Avenue in Saint-Hyacinthe  
Photo: Clément Kirouac

(14) Jacques Fiset, *op. cit.* p. 165

(15) *Le Courrier de St-Hyacinthe*, the oldest French weekly in North America. Web site: <http://www.lecourrier.qc.ca>



# JOURNAL DE MADAME ALICE LEPAGE PATRY

third episode

Special Collaboration:  
Claude J. Doiron

## Tuesday, December 28, 1920

Miss Bouchard came back this morning. She went over all the linoleums, carpets and painted surfaces with a damp cloth, etc., everything that could possibly do with some cleaning. The whole place is now spruced up for New Year and it was done fairly smoothly. Poor woman, she worked from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., rather dirty jobs for only \$2. The other day, the piano tuner earned \$5 for an hour and a half. It is not quite the same but, still, when you think of the work and tiredness involved, the poor soul should have been paid \$5 and him only \$2. She should be pitied. She is c-r-a-z-y, nothing she says ever makes any sense. The children find it funny hearing her talking nonsense. As long as she is told what to do and closely supervised, she works fine. Every evening when she was leaving I gave her a package. I like to give some happiness to the less fortunate more than to those who have all in abundance. As deranged as she is, she knows I look after her and she is devoted to me!

Cousin Lepage paid us a visit before leaving to visit father Agé-silas (older man but not a priest). She was looking great and in a really good mood, even after being under the weather all week. Uncle Bell stopped by this afternoon. He stayed about ten minutes – glad he found the way here!

It would have been nice if he had accepted to stay with us; he always promises to come back to stay, but in the meantime he goes to a hotel. It would be so easy for me to give him a room and, at the same time, to let him go as he pleases. He could be as free as he wishes. He is very kind and very generous. When he saw Simone, instinctively he put his hand in his pocket and taking out a \$1 he gently and discretely gave it to her. As he was leaving, he met Laurent and asked him: *Are you a young Patry?* Given Laurent's affirmative answer he said: *Let me see if I have an écu (money) for you?* Indeed he gave him a fifty-cent piece. When I mentioned how giving seems to be a must for him, he said: *Ah! I do not give as much as I would like, the pickings are less and less, there is very little left of the gold mine!* The Good Lord hits him where he is most sensitive, as it gives him so much pleasure to make others happy!

Letter from Miss Dunn, so happy with the famous cello. She writes a very good letter and most affectionate. Gabrielle was invited to go to **Cécile Kirouac (1)** on Salaberry Street this afternoon. She came back only after 7 p.m. happy about this young people's reunion. They played games, piano and danced. The food was superb. There were prizes to be won at the various games. Gabrielle did not win any. About twenty girls had been invited. A letter from **Alex (2)** with generous gifts and wishes even more generous as



Alice Lepage Patry

Collection Claude J. Doiron

they were so genuine and full of affection.

## Wednesday, December 29, 1920

On her way to the post office, Aline Lemay took the opportunity to stop by for an errand here. It was so nice to see her in the middle of the morning. It brought back good memories of days gone by! After doing a bit of housework and eating lunch, we, Simone, Gabrielle and I, went out to buy gifts. How difficult it is finding inexpensive little things but practical ones. I really like to find useful things. I am like this Mr. Blais who, on his Silver Wedding anniversary was given a very beautiful silver vase. Looking at this luxury object he said: *Hum ! I would have preferred a pound of butter!*

From one year to the next I hope to be richer! Until now, I have lived with hopes and I am still

1. At the time, Cécile Kirouac (00500) was 13 1/2 years old. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Marie of Quebec City in 1936. Seventy years later, she is still there and will be 99 in June 2006.

2. Mrs. Patry used to call her brother Alex for short but he was Abbé Alexandre Lepage, Parish Priest of Deschambault from 1914 to 1953.



living with hopes... I must admit that I am not feeling any worse for it. It is thanks to the gifts I receive that I manage to offer gifts in return. Met Miss Gelly who told me about her trip to Montreal in January. She is ever so nice and so close to **Mother Ste-Julie (3)** and always anxious to send her something extra-special for the New Year. Met a lot of people I know while shopping and only came back for supper.

Singing practice for Friday. Miss Dupont brought me my gift from the Parish Priest. He gives something to every singer in the choir. I had chosen a thermos bottle, it will be for my husband. It will be most useful to him when travelling and even at home, when he wants to take some hot coffee or even hot milk with him before going to bed. He eats so little! Simone received a brochure more like a small book from **her Irishman (4)**. A translation from Arabic or Turkish, everything looks strange; style, approach, pictures, I do not quite get the meaning. Will I get it explained by someone who understands English better than I do? The Misses Vallée came and brought me a lovely apron for New Year.

#### Thursday, December 30, 1920

I have just received a letter from Sherbrooke addressed to our brother William. I forwarded it as fast as I could and asked Laurent to mail it. Mother St-Donat writes a good letter full of news for the New Year. The festivities on the 25<sup>th</sup> went well, it was a success and now she is fully enjoying her short holiday. She sounds in a merry mood. I am worried about Mother St-Alex. I was glad to see her writing on William's parcel.

I would have loved to have been ready for Deschambault and take advantage of the boarders travel-

ling back to the seminary. Next year, I will try to do better! I phoned Mr. Kirouac's home then called Miss Champoux to find an occasion (to send a parcel) to Sherbrooke. No success. I will try to send it by express, it will make my gift look better and it will be more festive. New Year day comes only once a year!

I have so many things to do before January 1<sup>st</sup>. I am not complaining especially when looking around me, I see others fussing about and running around like crazy!

#### Friday, December 31, 1920

Last day of 1920. Life goes by so rapidly and we do too! My day was so full that, before I knew it, it was supper time. Letters from **Mother St-Alexandre and Mother St-Donat (5)** arrived by the 9 a.m. post bringing their good wishes and nice gifts. Mother St-Alex sent a nice calendar to Joe and I with a note recommending us to record on it only the happy and God Blessed

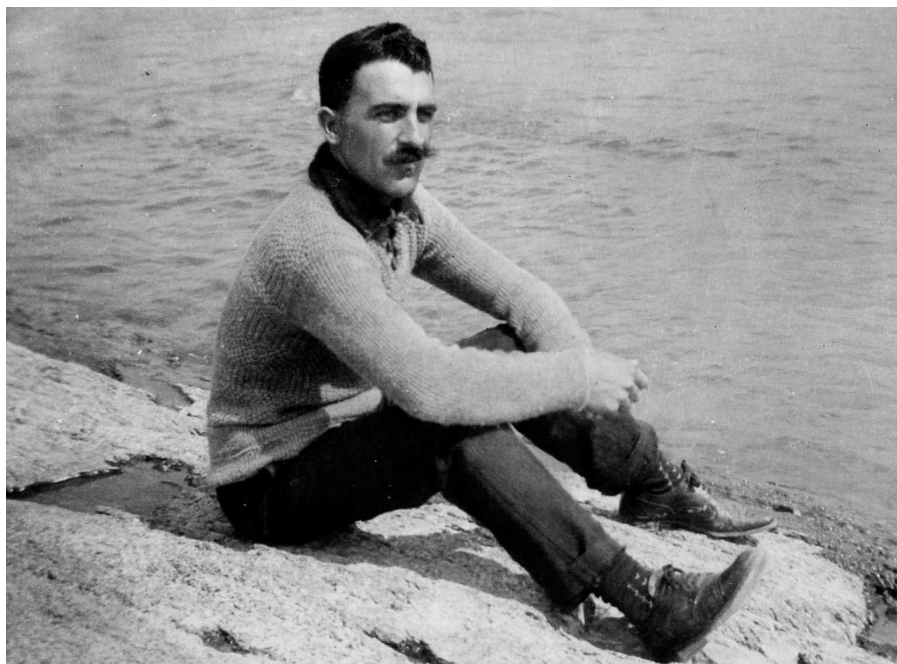
events. To Simone, she sent an ink blotter to quench her English correspondence, with a card of good wishes, so nice that Simone gave it to Mother St. Georges, her English teacher at the Ursulines Convent. To Gabrielle, a small calendar to record her holidays. To Laurent, a nice pencil to record his good grades. Mother St-Donat sent a nice religious image to each one of us: a sleeping Jesus went to the children and, to me, a gilt-edged image with New Year wishes by **Abbé Per-**

3. Mother St. Julie, a nun of the Congregation of Notre-Dame living in Montreal, was Mrs. Lepage's sister.

4. Simone met this gentleman, travelling by boat, on one of his stopovers in Quebec City.

5. Mother St. Alexandre and Mother St. Donat, also nuns of the Congregation of Notre-Dame living at the Convent Notre-Dame-de-Bellevue in Sainte-Foy, were also Mrs. Lepage's sisters.

6. The Abbé Henri Perreyve (1831-1865), priest of the Oratoire in Paris, professor of Ecclesiastical Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris from 1861 to 1865. Website: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11702a.htm> CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: **Henri Perreyve** - GRATRY, **Henri Perreyve** (London, 1872).



Joseph Patry, Alice Lepage's husband, photo taken in St. Laurent parish on Orléans Island in July 1912. (Photo: collection Claude J. Doiron)



**reyve (6).** This brought a fine air of celebration to this New Year's Eve, that otherwise would be just like any other day if it were not for this good habit of exchanging memories of the past year and wishes for the coming year.

Yesterday evening, I went to bed rather late as I was wrapping up presents. This morning, Laurent took to the post office those for the most distant relatives and for the party at grandma's. Paul, at my husband's office, sent off those for the god-daughters. I had a lot of cooking to do, a chicken, some rabbits, and more but I forget as there were interruptions. During the afternoon, Simone and Gabrielle went to pay my yearly fee for the church pew then went on to the convent to bring each of their teachers a little something: a calendar from the Franciscan Nuns to Mother Superior; a writing pad to Mother St. Claire; some cards with my monogram 'F' to Mother St. François-de-Paul; an ink blotter to Mother de l'Incarnation; Mother St. Alex's card to Mother St. Georges; some writing paper (15 cents) to Mother du St. Esprit; candies in a fancy box to Mother de l'Ange-Gardien; Quebec City postcards to Mother St. Edith; chalk crayons to Mother du Carmel; the whole made a lovely package well-wrapped and addressed to Mother Superior who was responsible for distributing everything.

Simone received two thank you notes from Mothers St. François and St. Georges. Aunt Yvonne Patry came and brought grandmother's gifts to our family. There was a silver picture frame for me as well as a fruit-shaped pin-cushion, two hand-embroidered handkerchiefs by Marie-Louise. Simone received a silver chain and purse; Gabrielle some writing paper, Laurent a checker game. Receiving gifts is always a renewed pleasure no matter one's

age and at grandmother's house it was the same fun and joy for them to receive our New Year's presents: A bottle of perfume from the 'Everlasting Youth Fountain' for grandmother to keep her forever young and fresh; a manicure set for Marie-Louise; a gift box with soap, special toothpaste and a powder puff for Yvonne; talcum powder for Jeanne. These articles are always useful anywhere and everywhere.

At supper time, gift distribution, a very happy time. Everyone had quite a few. The largest gift came from Papa, a gold and white dinner set that came just at the right time as tea cups always go missing! Simone received some perfume from the young (man) Lessard and we teased her about it. She has a good sense of humour.

We went to church for the adoration hour; there were special readings and we sang Christmas Carols. There were lots of people in a pious mood. The Lieutenant-Governor (of Quebec) and **Lady Fitzpatrick (7)** were seated in their pew. What a wonderful example for one and all! How to grow old! I often admire him, especially at church where his dignified attitude is in accordance with his post. Jeanne Dery sang *Jesus of Nazareth* with taste and angelic piety. Mr. Gagnon brilliantly accompanied (at the organ) and it inspired the singing of the congregation. As they were leaving the church people were saying how beautiful it all was. I loved that hour spent with Jesus present in the Holy Host on the last day of the Year. So many favours received and abundantly granted on us all. It felt good to spend an hour expressing gratitude for all that we have received! How I thought about you all! It is a moment to think about the past and remember. I came back home with Gabrielle and **Mr. Ga-**



Alice Lepage before her wedding

Collection Claude J. Doiron

**gnon (8).** Also met cousin (Mr.) Lavoie with cousins Blanche and Jeanne. We chatted and laughed together.

The Misses Vallée brought us some green plants and a meat pie made by Eugénie. We had to taste is right away as she wanted to know if it was good! I gave the postman a tiepin but not \$15. I also gave a similar tiepin to the **baker (9)**. These two are faithful servants as they come around in all weather, as does the young boy delivering the newspapers. I keep aside the gift for my cleaning woman who did not come.

7. Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec from 1918 until 1923.

8. Mr. Henri Gagnon, organist at the Catholic Basilica in Quebec City and a neighbour of Mrs. Patry.

9. In those days, the baker also delivered bread at home.



*Introduction*  
*Robert Kirouac*

**W**hat a chance it was and why not take advantage of it when possible. Mrs. Maryvonne LeCoat discovered a most interesting document. Mrs. Le Coat is the lady who organized the wonderful reception on the ancestral land of our forefathers when the Canadian delegation of Kirouacs travelled to Brittany in July 2000. She is still as active as ever within our association and would not miss another occasion ...

Mrs. LeCoat, who is still living in Morlaix in Brittany, is from the Kervoach area near Lanmeur, where our family name takes its origin. She often returns to the Kervoach hamlet to visit her mother and her brother's family. Recently, while visiting there, she went up into an attic and, by chance, came upon a 1959 magazine.

The pages had turned yellow with age nevertheless it was a brochure about the small town of Huelgoat and surroundings. Turning the pages she kept reading the various evocative and intriguing titles: "By the Huelgoat forest", "Giants' Stones", "The Devil's Hole" ... There are even some old photographs: old stone houses, legendary forest, grottos, river and lake in the area! Of course we know that it is in Huelgoat that the Le Bihan family lived and where our ancestor Urbain-François Le Bihan, sieur de Kervoach, was born.

Thanks to modern day conveniences, scanning and E-mailing, Mrs. LeCoat is offering us the chance to read and appreciate some of these pages full of history and legends that are so precious to us, descendants of a Breton ancestor. So here is a first part in the present issue of the Trésor; others will follow in the next bulletins this year.

**Source:** De Parades, Bernard (1959) *Huelgoat, forêt légendaire (Legendary Forest)*, Édition d'Art Jos Le Doaré, Châteaulin (Finistère), p. 34.

## Huelgoat – Legendary Forest On the Edge of Huelgoat

by Bernard de Parades

**I**n the centre of Brittany, Huelgoat shouts its name high and clear like a tree being felled. In the Breton language there are two parts to the name: *Huel* means *high* and *Koat* means *wood/forest*. So the etymology of the name gives a choice, either it means *high forest* e.g. *high trees* or *forest on high ground*.

In other words the name serves to indicate a sector of the forest where the trees are tallest among woods, woodland, grove, bush, copse, with romantic names like: Coamocum, Coat Elez, Coat an alac'h, Coat Queau, Beuc'h Coat, Botmeur, Bolazec, Botvarec, then Coudraie and Feuillée seem almost odd with their Roman/French sounding names.

The whole of the Argoat region made up the large Breton forest of yesteryears. But as time went by, the lumbermen's axe chopped it down gradually. They hacked down large sections without thinking about future needs for wood. The peasant took over the impoverished land, the quarry-men picked up the stones as they were uncovered, the moor took over the rest. Gradually, on the hills and in the valleys, houses appeared and grew in numbers using the wood for the frames and the local granite for walls.

*Huelgoat am eus gwelet e koad,  
Ha goude-ze e prad,  
Bremañ welan anezi eur ger vrao a varc 'had*

"I saw Huelgoat as a forest, later as a prairie, now I see a beautiful large market town."

The beautiful town of Huelgoat endeavours to smile through the granite house fronts and the straight lines of its main square. The church is as humble as St. Yves, its patron saint, and to avoid upsetting anyone, the House of God is now one of many ordinary business houses. In the evening, the lake turns to a misty blue as described in legends.

But Huelgoat is not so much a small town as a forest starting at the Mill. This must have been a very large one during the days of Dukes and Kings; under King François I, a special provision of the law said that wood-cutting would be done fifty times. Today the forest estate is broken up. The peasants' woodlots reserved for burning in their homes surround a grove of oak, beech and conifers. The spruces elbow the pines and both their cones give out a lovely scent. Within this botanical family, the young firs are growing up in the under-growth, ready to take over. These trees, in spite of rocks, streams and valleys seem to manage to grow as straight as wished by the officers of the Department of Forests and Rivers where their identity and numbers are carefully tallied in forestry business books.

But do not remain standing there at the edge of the forest. There are roads, lanes and alleyways cutting through the tree city. You have to follow the indicated paths and those that are not marked all the way to the blueberry patch, heather, ferns and moss.

Perhaps you will meet the Spirit of the Forest. It is an old woman soberly dressed with the colours of the Mountain, an old woman carrying a dead branch with, on its end, looking like a question mark, the scythe with a very worn handle. Let it be known that this old woman knows all the legends of Huelgoat and that, through her, a simple location can suddenly take a wonderful life of its own.

### Stone Over Stone

Rounded, curved, shaped by the ages, the Huelgoat rocks grow through fields and forest. They burst out of the earth and lie around like sleepy beasts. Sometimes alone, sometimes piled up chaotically, of course it brings questions to mind.



Collection: l'Association des familles Kirouac

19th century view of the town of Huelgoat, photo on the Restaurant Menu of *Hôtel du Lac*, Huelgoat.

But please do not believe those little booklets declaring “that water brought them there” and do not believe them especially when they tell you that on dry days, when there is no more water in the streams, that “the water has gone to fetch more stones.”

To find out the truth, it is better to imagine the beginning of the world according to the Breton tradition. When the Creator was stirring the liquefied smelting granite into a paste that looked like a bad black wheat mush, lumps appeared. The *Yod gwiniz du* cooled down and the years

took bites out of it all and threw up cooking imperfections.

The geologist, more matter-of-fact, will state that some blocks resisted to the wet acids that ate at its gangue (vein-stone). Patiently, millennia after millennia, the trickling took away into the valley all the sand and clay covering. Naked and isolated, the stones crashed down the hillsides, stopping wherever they could, tumbling over each other to end up into the chaos where names given them vary from the devil to the Virgin; some rocks play some high-wire act like the ‘Roche Tremblante’ e.g. the ‘Trembling Rock’ or the ‘Champignon’ the ‘Mushroom’. Others, half-buried, stayed on higher ground such as the ‘Roche Cintrée’ e.g. the ‘Vaulted Rock’ overlooking the vast forested horizon. Indeed this one looks like the queen of the country, particularly since a protective railing has given ‘her’ a tiara.

This is the simple mystery of these rocks. To understand it well, all you need to do is go to one of the quarries where, for the past thirty years, the autopsy of the Huelgoat soil is being studied; because after quarrying the surface blocks during centuries to build churches, chapels and houses, men now have to open up the soil to search for the inner solid core and exploit it.

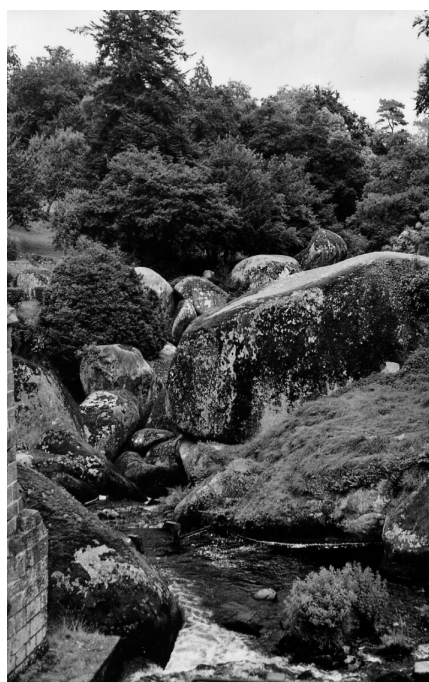
Renan (1) said that “stones seem to be the natural symbol of the Celtic races”. In Kerempulven, in homage to their land, the first Armoricans of the Argoat put up a menhir where they would raise their glasses – well they still do so to this

day! Today, with the blessing of St. Barbara (Sainte Barbe in French) the patron saint of people who deal with stone powder and fire, i.e. explosive, they split rock in pieces and cut it and shape it into smaller stones, turning them into lintel and cornices for houses being built sometimes far away from the quarries. The art of the quarrymen has changed them into a clan of men with hands and throats of granite (because of the cursed dust they always have to chase away!). But their hearts are not so and their memories are alive with the legends attached to their trade.

The Arré Mountains used to form a large town with walls and towers that could be seen from everywhere in Brittany. It was a city of rich quarrymen because they were well paid for their work. During a Christmas night when they were all being merry, eating and drinking, instead of attending Midnight Mass, the walls crumbled, the mountain opened up and swallowed all these faithless quarrymen. On the moor one can still hear some deep hammering sounds, as if some miners were working inside the mountain. These are the cursed quarrymen cutting stones to rebuild their city. Until the end of time, they are condemned to work in vain. As soon as a block is cut and shaped it turns into powder. They swear so loudly then that the whole mountain shakes.

(1) Ernest Renan, historian, philosopher and writer. Born in Tréguier, Brittany, on February 28, 1823, he died in Paris on October 2, 1892.

Photo: François Kirouac



The Chaos of Huelgoat



# GENEALOGY / THE READERS' PAGE

*The AFKFA computerized genealogical data base includes some couples where one of the partner's name is missing. Answers to the following questions would enable us to fill in the gaps. (François Kirouac)*

## Question 52

**Answer from Gregory Kyroutac, Ashland, Illinois USA:**

The husband of Lorraine Kerouac is John Crocker. AND thanks to Greg's research, he found the obituary in the *Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library* and now we know that our family name is on the moon!

From the Wednesday, December 23, 1970, edition of the *Kankakee (Illinois) Daily Journal*:

"A former Kankakee woman who was involved in this country's space program died Monday night at Orlando, Florida, after a three-month illness. Mrs. Lorraine Kerouac Crocker, 46, worked at the NASA space flight center in Cape Kennedy, where she participated in the Apollo 11 flight as an employee of the Martin Co. She was one of several employees who wrote their names on one of the items which was later to be deposited on the moon. She worked at a flight control panel."

## Question 56

**Answer from Joan Meisterling\*:**

The wife of Thomas Kerouac, son of Vernon Kirouac and Joan Meisterling, is Misty Hermes.

## Question 57

**Answer from Joan Meisterling\*:**

The wife of Dale Kerouac, son of Vernon Kirouac and Joan Meisterling, is Laura Ahlden, daughter of Kenneth L. Ahlden and Linda Elliott.

## Question 58

**Answer from Joan Meisterling\*:**

The wife of Robert Kirouac, son of Vernon Kirouac and Joan Meisterling, is Joady Price.

## Question 67

**Answer from Laurence Martin "Skip" Groeneveld (Greg Kyroutac's second cousin)\*:**

Laurence Martin Groeneveld, son of Laurence Groeneveld and Sylvia Kyroutac, was married three times: first to Ursula Gottschling in 1975; second to Kathy Crawford in 1989 and currently to Kimberly Dixon since 2001.

**\*Thanks to Greg Kyroutac from Ashland, Illinois, for asking his relatives for the answer.**

## Question 68

What is the name of the wife of Raymond Hamelin, son of Félix Hamelin and Clara Kéroutac?

## Question 69

What is the name of the wife of Ernest Hamelin, son of Félix Hamelin and Clara Kéroutac?

## Question 70

What is the name of the wife of René Lacroix, son of Léopold Lacroix and Simonne Kirouac?

## Question 71

What is the name of the wife of Roger Lacroix, son of Léopold Lacroix and Simonne Kirouac?

Send in your genealogy-related questions, we will try to answer them; results will be published in the *Trésor*.

The Editorial Team

## Question 72

What is the name of the wife of David Gifford, son of Frederick Gifford Sr. and Theresa Kyroutac?

## Question 73

What is the name of the wife of Frederick Gifford Jr., son of Frederick Gifford, Sr. and Theresa Kyroutac?

## Question 74

What is the name of the wife of Donald Gifford, son of Frederick Gifford Sr. and Theresa Kyroutac?

## Question 75

What is the name of the wife of Guy Gagnon, son of Joseph Edmond Gagnon and Anny Kéroutac?

## Question 76

What is the name of the parents of Lucie Kirouac, married in Val d'Or, Quebec, on September 12, 1987? What is the name of her husband?

## Question 77

What is the name of the husband of Jane Kirouac, daughter of Omer Daniel Kirouac and Rita Nash?

## Question 78

What is the name of the husband of Wendy Kirouac, daughter of Henry Joseph Kirouac and Laura Bisson?

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