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David Simard

LA PATRIE

LA SUPERSTITION RELIGIEUSE ET SES CONSÉQUENCES SUR NOUS TOUS

Pour en finir avec l'âge de la déraison

Voici donc qu'on découvre que la candidate conservatrice dans Saint-Bruno/Saint-Hubert, Nicole Charbonneau-Barron, est membre d'un groupe sectaire catholique et profondément réactionnaire, l'Opus Dei. Bien sûr, c'est son droit le plus strict, tout comme la candidate du NPD dans Bourassa, Samira Laouni, a le droit elle aussi de porter ce symbole éloquent d'intégrisme et de soumission des femmes qu'est le voile islamique tout en se présentant pour un parti qui se prétend « progressiste ». Par-delà la nécessaire critique de la présence du dogmatisme religieux sur la scène politique, nous pouvons en profiter pour aborder le cœur du problème : la religion, comme toute orthodoxie, implique la renonciation à l'esprit critique, ce ferment de l'individualité. Les degrés de cette renonciation peuvent certes varier selon les sectes et aussi d'un individu à un autre, mais elle n'en est pas moins au fondement de la croyance religieuse.

L'adhérent à quelque croyance religieuse que ce soit dit : « Il faut avoir la foi », ce qui se traduit par : « Croyez sans demander de preuve », donc croyez aveuglément ce qu'on vous dit de croire. De fait, malgré les progrès des connaissances et des sciences, le mysticisme, la superstition et la déraison gouvernent encore un très vaste nombre d'esprits humains. Aussi, lorsque faiblit l'influence des religions établies, ce sont souvent les sectes, ou parfois le dogmatisme idéologique, qui prennent la relève.

La vie humaine nécessite de

cultiver la pensée critique et la raison, celle-ci étant l'une des facultés qui distinguent le mieux notre espèce. Mais on est bien loin du compte : pour le mesurer, on n'a qu'à songer au fait que l'un des deux partis politiques majeurs des États-Unis sombre dans l'obscurantisme religieux le plus délirant, comme l'incarne si bien la candidate républicaine à la vice-présidence, Sarah Palin. Ici au Canada, on connaît bien l'influence de l'aile réactionnaire et fondamentaliste chrétienne du parti conservateur fédéral, influence qui est assez importante pour nous faire craindre les conséquences de l'obtention d'un mandat majoritaire par le gouvernement de Stephen Harper.

Plusieurs des problèmes les plus cruciaux de notre civilisation émanent de l'influence des croyances surnaturelles et irrationnelles qui, il est vrai, se manifestent de multiples manières. Pourtant, nous pouvons creuser pendant des années dans les livres spirituels et soi-disant « sacrés » en essayant d'y trouver ce qui pourrait s'avérer comme une révélation solidement établie sur des faits, voire comme une compréhension de l'univers qui soit fondée sur le réel. Mais ces volumes ne sont remplis que de fables fantaisistes, de paraboles au langage incompréhensible, de maximes formidablement incohérentes les unes par rapport aux autres.

Pourquoi l'être humain a-t-il encore tendance à croire aux fables forgées par d'habiles mystiques et

prophètes tout aussi autoproclamés les uns que les autres ? Compte tenu du fait qu'il est avéré que les croyances surnaturelles et la déraison religieuse remontent à longtemps avant l'âge de la raison, cette question laisse perplexe, et elle n'a pas fini de le faire, car au lieu de vivre en toute liberté en développant ses facultés qui découlent de sa capacité à raisonner, il semble plus séduisant à plusieurs de sombrer dans le syndrome du mouton qui a besoin d'un berger pour lui dire comment il doit penser et vivre. Au lieu de conduire leur propre vie en développant toutes les richesses de leur individualité propre, ces gens préfèrent donc se laisser conduire. Comme des moutons. Et les moutons, vous savez ce qu'on en fait : on les tond.

Je vous laisse sur ces mots du très regretté Carl Sagan qui, il me semble, donnent beaucoup à réfléchir et qui, aussi, nous appelle

pas mal mieux que les superstitions de toute sorte à développer l'art de vivre cette seule vie qui nous est dévolue à chacun : « Pour moi, il vaut beaucoup mieux aborder

l'univers tel qu'il est réellement, plutôt que de se laisser abuser par des illusions, aussi satisfaisantes et rassurantes celles-ci puissent-elles paraître. » ♦



...on connaît bien l'influence de l'aile réactionnaire et fondamentaliste chrétienne du parti conservateur fédéral, influence qui est assez importante pour nous faire craindre les conséquences de l'obtention d'un mandat majoritaire par le gouvernement de Stephen Harper.

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SOMETHING WORTH HAVING AN ELECTION ABOUT

Why our elections highlight the need for a true Canadian Republic

“The Republican form of Government is the highest form of government; but because of this it requires the highest type of human nature.”

~ Herbert Spencer

And, they're off!

Prime Minister Harper's frustration with a recalcitrant opposition was understandable. An opposition that sabre-rattled with weekly regularity yet supported the government on some forty confidence votes. Sadly,

the tradition of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition proposing more than merely opposing is lacking in Canada. Frankly, Mr. Harper came closer to that goal when he was in opposition than any recent leader.

That is all the more reason why it

was to be hoped that the civility and integrity that is a hallmark of his politics would have been maintained. As Lorne Gunter wrote recently the fixed election date law was, more than anything else, legacy legislation. Though understandable, it remains unfortunate that it was not respected.

Harper has now led the longest minority government in this nation's history. Whether or not you agree with all of his legislative agenda, it cannot credibly be argued that he has not succeeded.

The Conservative government was elected with a plan to move forward on five areas of legislation. It got most of their agenda through on four of these. Harper may be right that Parliament is dysfunctional. But that's politics. Reform Parliament by all means, but why make the people pay with a very expensive election.

The only irritant of any consequence that occurred during the summer recess was the House Ethics Committee hearings into Tory finances in the last campaign. Mostly technical issues they involve some one million dollars. This new election costs hundreds of millions.

More than the cost, the sight of this nation being plunged into a fourth election in eight years reeks of banana republic imagery. If there was some desire to tackle compelling issues it would be understandable. Though urgent matters of economic disparity and social justice exist, there does not seem to be the political will by any party to address them. This election seems just another distraction of bread and circuses.

We have criticized the opposition, Liberal and NDP both, for ignoring the critical issues of the health care crisis, of one-third of our urban households living in poverty and of galloping nanny-statism destroying our privacy rights. Instead of addressing these, we get the “Green shift” with a 30/50 anti-poverty plan built into it. The reality is there is no environmental crisis to the degree the eco-theocrats would have us believe and eco-theocratic environmental proposals just don't work and the politicians know it. They don't work because they don't address the fundamental issue of the internal

combustion engine. Instead of a carbon tax, Mr. Dion would serve the public better if he proposed credits making hybrid cars affordable at the \$20,000 level. That would be a real “green shift”. But that involves taking on vested interests.

Politicians are loath to do that. And lest anyone think that the tax will be “revenue neutral” just remember the Tory promises characterizing the GST in the same way. No tax is ever “neutral”. But it's easier for politicians to “go green” than to tackle the tough political and distributive problems we still face in this land of great wealth that has produced only a thin veneer of affluence.

The Conservative government does not provide us with much justification for an election either. Mr. Harper has given Canada a bold and principled position in foreign affairs and our standing in the world. He has rightly engaged us in mankind's struggles for freedom and redemptive change. He has begun, some would say too slowly, to roll back government encroachment in our lives and started to reduce the groaning federal bureaucracy. He has also begun to lower our unconscionably high levels of taxation which hurt the working man and woman more than any other strata of society.

Yet the reasons offered for an early election have to do with the desire to pass certain pieces of criminal and social legislation. These pieces of legislation are not only not worthy of an election, they are not worthy of Stephen Harper the man. Bills like C-10 on limiting film financing based on sexual content and C-484 that would re-open the debate on fetal rights are not necessary. The former reeks of censorship. The latter, of the imposition of state morality on what should be a private matter. The Tories “tough on crime” bills that include mandatory minimums are totally disconnected from reality. Violent crime in Canada has been going down consistently. The attempt to make Canadians believe there is some kind of violent crime epidemic is wrong. Sadly, in this election, the Tory package panders too much to a recalcitrant right and the Liberals to the

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Imagine if the organizing principle of our political system was not the imperative of obtaining and keeping power but of protecting individual consequence and conscience as set out in our Charter. Imagine if our head of government took an oath to protect our most precious and inalienable rights and not swear loyalty to a foreign sovereign. Imagine the power of the sovereignty of our suffrage. Imagine every citizen of Canada as a king and queen yet no one wearing a crown. Imagine the final realization of the vision of Lafontaine and Baldwin of true “responsible government”.

statocratic left. Neither will serve the greater good.

The role of a political party is greater than just acquiring and keeping power. If elements in the Liberal Party wanted a quick election in order to see Mr. Dion defeated and send the party into another leadership convention, and elements in the Conservative party are afraid of the effects of Obama’s campaign on trends in Canada and of possibly worsening economic conditions, those considerations have nothing to do with the fiduciary responsibility that both government and opposition owe to the Canadian people.

The election date law that Mr. Harper succeeded in passing is historic. Perhaps the only element missing was that governments must govern for the full term whether they are majority or minority. Now that was something to look forward to.

Here are some others.

Imagine that when a man or woman presents themselves as a candidate to lead this nation you get to vote for them directly. Imagine that the people who want to represent your riding are responsible only to you, not to some “leader”.

Imagine that though they may all be members of parties, party politics in the house of the people’s assembly is kept to a minimum because the leader of the nation and the elected representatives serve for fixed terms that cannot be terminated because of minority standings.

Imagine that we will know the exact election date every four years. Imagine that our head of government

will not be able to “whip” elected representatives of his party in line votes because they obtain their mandate directly from the voters as the head of government does. Imagine that Canada’s “first past the post” system is relegated to the dustbin of history.

Imagine that if we directly elect a head of government from one party while another’s elected representatives constitute the plurality or majority of the house of the people’s assembly they actually have to get along because there will be no election for four years and if they don’t honor the public trust and produce fiduciary governance they will be turfed.

Imagine that our elected head of government can select a cabinet, the executive, choosing from the nations best and brightest. Imagine that the committees of the house of the people’s assembly, the legislature, are given real budgets for research, investigation and legislation with power equal to the executive.

Imagine that our Senators are elected. Imagine if both levels are forced to get along for the greater good. Imagine that both levels make our laws together.

Imagine that our head of state is not a pomp and circumstance painted figurehead but the person we actually vote for. Imagine that our judiciary has equal power to the executive and legislative powers to hear the people’s grievances and is not locked into merely judging the people but judging the law.

Imagine if the organizing principle

of our political system is not the imperative of obtaining and keeping power but of protecting individual consequence and conscience as set out in our Charter. Imagine if our head of government takes an oath to protect our most precious and inalienable rights and not swears loyalty to a foreign sovereign.

Imagine the power of the sovereignty of our suffrage. Imagine every citizen of Canada as a king and queen yet no one wears a crown. Imagine the final realization of the vision of Lafontaine and Baldwin of true “responsible government”.

Now imagine that it is no dream. It is the Canadian Republic.

Canadians have for too long been conditioned to abdicate their individual imperatives and the sovereignty of their suffrage to institutions. It’s a top down process. When citizens are raised from childhood on bended knee, they can never arouse in themselves the spirit, or confidence to take control of their own lives. Buck-passing becomes a way of life. This nation’s national political will has become as petrified as the trees in Russian gulags.

Our offices of state created from Canada’s beginnings walls of secrecy in council rooms apart that have proved endemic to the development of a true liberal pluralistic democracy fuelled by an engaged citizenry of independent thought and action. And the past twenty years in particular have seen our highest elected officials fully exploit the protection of those walls of secrecy. It has resulted in one scholar has



called a “controlled democracy”.

The Oxford Dictionary defines Republicanism as “...the belief that the supreme power of a country should be vested in the electoral

power of the people...”

What a concept. Supreme power vested in the people.

Now that’s something worth having an election about. ♦



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Ex-dramaturge, romancier persévérant, essayiste et poète à ses heures, Pierre K. Malouf fréquente des fédéralistes et des indépendantistes, des gens de gauche et des gens de droite, des jeunes et des vieux, des écrivains et des ingénieurs. Gentil comme tout, il ne dit pas toujours tout ce qu'il pense, mais pense toujours ce qu'il écrit.

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LES ÉLECTIONS FÉDÉRALES ET LA PRÉSENCE CANADIENNE EN AFGHANISTAN

Un pacifisme de tout repos

La campagne électorale vient à peine de débiter (j'écris ces lignes le 8 septembre) que déjà les sondages pleuvent. Tous prévoient une victoire des tories, une déconfiture des libéraux. Au Québec, avant même que la campagne ne soit officiellement lancée, un sondage Léger Marketing—Le Devoir—The Globe & Mail plaçait nez à nez les partis de

pétage de bretelles ? Qu'en est-il, par exemple, de notre prétendu pacifisme ? Un sondage Segma-La Presse-Groupe Gesca publié aujourd'hui (nous sommes toujours le 8 septembre), nous apprend que notre engagement militaire en Afghanistan ne constitue l'enjeu principal de cette élection que pour 4 % des électeurs québécois. Au Canada 11 % des

nous fait horreur, eux ils s'en accommodent et peut-être même qu'ils aiment ça.

Un autre sondage (commenté ce matin par François Brousseau dans Le Devoir), nous apprend que 75 % des Québécois (65 % des Canadiens) pensent que la mission en Afghanistan est ou sera un échec, que 70 % des Québécois (56 % des Canadiens)

l'Onu et de l'Otan. Le but principal de la présence des troupes occidentales en Afghanistan, c'est d'empêcher le retour au pouvoir des Talibans. Pas de 11 septembre, pas de troupes canadiennes en Afghanistan (ni évidemment de troupes américaines, françaises, anglaises, norvégiennes, etc.). L'Afghanistan des Talibans était, n'est-ce pas, le sanctuaire d'Al Qaeda.

Le Canada est à bout de souffle ? Fort bien. Qu'il continue seulement de faire sa part.

Des soldats canadiens ont trouvé la mort en Europe pendant la Seconde Guerre. Est-ce qu'on a décidé pour autant de rapatrier les troupes ? Empêcher le retour au pouvoir des Talibans me paraît une cause aussi juste que d'empêcher les Nazis de



Stephen Harper et de Gilles Duceppe. Les Québécois ne partageraient donc pas l'avis du chef du Bloc, qui déclare avec aplomb (et paraît en être sincèrement convaincu) que les politiques du Parti conservateur contredisent les « valeurs québécoises » ? Près d'un tiers des Québécois s'approprieraient ainsi à trahir nos soi-disant valeurs « communes » en votant pour la loi et l'ordre, pour la censure, pour la guerre, pour un clone de George W. Bush.

Mais que peuvent bien valoir ces « valeurs » qui n'ont d'autre conséquence réelle qu'un solennel

personnes sondées le considèrent comme primordial.

Qu'est-ce à dire ? L'occasion se présente de défaire un gouvernement belliqueux et nous n'en profiterons pas ? Serions-nous moins pacifiques que les cow-boys des Prairies, chez qui la question de l'Afghanistan arrive en troisième place dans l'ordre des priorités, à égalité avec l'environnement ? On me rétorquera que si les autres Canadiens sont plus nombreux à se préoccuper de la question de l'Afghanistan, c'est qu'à leurs yeux pas assez de sang n'y est versé. Ils en veulent plus ! La guerre

appellent à un rapatriement des troupes. Wow ! Sommes plus pacifiques que les Canadiens ou simplement plus défaitistes ? Admettons que nous sommes plus pacifiques. Nous allons quand même permettre l'élection d'un gouvernement conservateur majoritaire, qui prolongera la guerre en Afghanistan grâce à notre appui honteux.

Voici ma franche opinion.

La mission canadienne en Afghanistan est justifiée et doit être poursuivie. Elle résulte des événements du 11 septembre 2001 et du fait que notre pays est membre de

La mission canadienne en Afghanistan est justifiée et doit être poursuivie. Elle résulte des événements du 11 septembre 2001 et du fait que notre pays est membre de l'Onu et de l'Otan. Le but principal de la présence des troupes occidentales en Afghanistan, c'est d'empêcher le retour au pouvoir des Talibans.

Ils ne voulaient pas nous voir chez eux ? Facile : ils n'avaient qu'à empêcher leur copain Ben Laden de faire jolou dans les tours (pour reprendre les mots de Maurice G. Dantec).

Nous allons échouer ? Peut-être. Les Talibans reprennent lentement le dessus, la population afghane en a marre de nos bavures, le gouvernement Karzaï est corrompu, les Seigneurs de la guerre font la pluie et le beau temps... N'empêche qu'il faut empêcher les Talibans de reprendre le pouvoir. Encore faut-il y consacrer les ressources nécessaires.

dominer l'Europe.

Mais rappelons-nous que le problème ne se poserait pas si les Talibans n'avaient pas couché avec ti-Ben. Ils n'avaient qu'à ne pas se mêler de nos affaires, nous ne nous mêlerions pas des leurs.

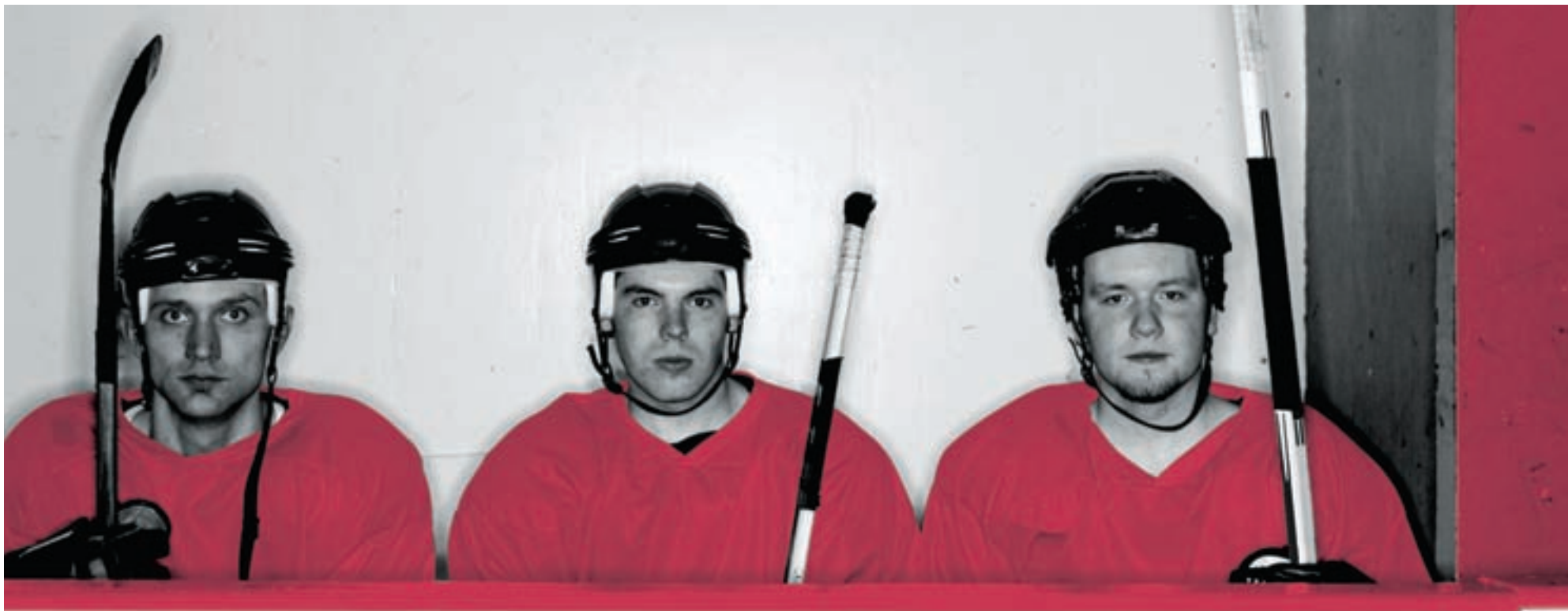
Libre à vous d'être plutôt du même avis que Gil Courtemanche, qui écrivait, le 15 septembre 2001 : « Ce n'est ni la démocratie, ni l'Occident qui ont été attaqués le 11 septembre, ce sont les États-Unis. » Qu'a dit le même loustic après les attentats de Madrid ? Qu'a-t-il dit après ceux de Londres ? ♣

"You can get anything you want in life if you help others get what they want."

- George F. Lengvari, Sr.



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Instead of working to bring about positive change, Canadian aid allows these dysfunctional and sometimes tyrannical regimes to remain intact while we apply band-aids to the symptoms.

Canada consistently fails to support democracies around the world such as India, Taiwan, America and Israel. In many cases, we actively work against them. And with the exception of Ukraine, Canada refuses to take measurable action to support the billions of people aspiring for democracy, freedom and accountable governments around the world.

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CUPFA ACTION ON PAY EQUITY

Concordia back at the table

Just days after classes resumed at Concordia, the university's part-time faculty association is getting ready to pull the rug out from under the administration's feet.

"We're still talking," said CUPFA (Concordia University Part-time Faculty Association) president Maria Peluso, "...but time's up. If the university doesn't come up with a serious offer within the next few days, we're prepared to go out on a full strike."

Once again, the university's administration is facing a crisis. After more than six years without a working contract, all of the university's part-time teaching staff plan to walk out of their classrooms if the university still refuses to negotiate a new contract. Once last year's sporadic series of rotating strikes finally convinced the university its part-time staffers were serious, the university's administration resumed its negotiations with the CUPFA in

order to avoid further trouble. However, many part-timers believe the university is still not taking them seriously and more than a few believe a strike is inevitable. Last Sunday evening, only days before Peluso is scheduled to call a strike, the university put a serious offer on the table which Peluso says "...was interesting." While both parties support the principle of pay equity, Peluso said the discussions are now being reduced to how much the university owes its part-time staffers.

"Equity is the big issue," said Peluso. "We're looking for internal parity with the university's own faculty as much as we're looking for external equity equal to whatever part-timers at UM (Université de Montréal) and other universities are making."

After a six year hiatus, that could be very expensive because the wage gap has become one of the big items on the table. Concordia's part-time faculty make only \$5400 for each

Concordia's part-time faculty make only \$5400 for each three credit course taught over a semester while part-time staff at other universities across the country make an average of \$7200 per course.

three credit course taught over a semester while part-time staff at other universities across the country make an average of \$7200 per course. As the administration neglected to deal with the issue for over 6 years, any settlement will be retroactive which invariably means the university will have to make up the

difference or face a strike. Peluso also insists the administration must stop hiring full-time staff to fill in part-time staff positions.

"The university must respect its own contract," she said. After years of labor arbitration, court dates and endless legal obfuscation, Peluso said the university is still hiring full-time staff

to fill in part-time positions.

Teaching conditions are another big issue. Peluso and other working professors believe the quality of the university's education is beginning to suffer because of excessive class size and negligible facilities. While both Peluso and the university's administration say there is a lot of good will at the table, she also said her members are quickly running out of patience.

"I have over a 1000 members who do not have an office where they can receive and talk to students," she said. "They don't even have a place where they can leave their hat and coat."

While Chris Mota, the university's head of media relations, said she could not comment about the university's ongoing discussions with its part-time faculty association, she did say she was optimistic about the negotiations and their ultimate results.

"There's a lot of good will," she said. "...and this university will do everything in its power not to harm the education of its students."

Mota then went on to briefly discuss the university's financial difficulties, particularly as the university is still carrying a \$4 million dollar deficit after all the efforts made to reduce expenses. Peluso said she is well aware of the university's financial situation but she also knows the difference between Concordia's \$4 million dollar deficit and UQàM's \$300 million dollar train-wreck.

"If they're so concerned about their deficit," asked Peluso, "... why do they keep handing out bonus checks to their senior administrators?"

As both the university and its part-time staff continue to negotiate their new contract, both sides know there is far more at stake than money and assorted working conditions. ♦



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MÉTROPOLITAIN MONTREAL RIDING REVIEW

Election 2008: Riding by Riding



Laurier Sainte-Marie

The riding of Laurier-Sainte-Marie includes the eastern section of the Plateau, the western part of Ville-Marie and the working-class neighbourhoods of Centre-Sud. The majority francophone riding first elected Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe in 1990. Duceppe won as an independent in a resounding victory against Liberal candidate Denis Coderre. With that victory, he became the Bloc's first member of parliament.

Born in 1947, Duceppe has a degree in political science and was a union organizer before going into politics. In 2006 he won a majority with 54 per cent of the vote but this election is dogged by rumours it may be his last campaign as party leader.

The Liberal candidate, Sebastien Caron, is a lawyer with Heenan Blaikie, a law firm that has had two former Prime Ministers on its roster - Jean Chretien and Pierre Trudeau. Caron is an executive director with Lawyers Without Borders, an NGO promoting rights around the world. He supports environmental and arts issues and lives in Laurier-Sainte-Marie with his family.

Professor and author Francois Gregoire is the NDP candidate in the riding. He has taught political science at CEGEP Edouard-Montpetit for over 30 years and has been involved in various unions. It's the third time Gregoire is campaigning in the riding. He came a distant second to Duceppe in 2006.

Running for the Conservatives for the first time is Charles K. Langford, who teaches business at UQAM and who has written several books on portfolio management. He also works as a financial advisor.

As of press time, the Green Party was not running a candidate in the riding.



Westmount Ville-Marie

Candidates in the riding of Westmount-Ville-Marie have been campaigning since earlier this summer. In Liberal Marc Garneau's case since the winter. A federal byelection planned for Sept. 8 was canceled when Prime Minister Stephen Harper called a general election in early September.

In 2006, Liberal Lucienne Robillard won a fourth term in the

riding but resigned her seat this January.

The central Montreal riding is a traditional Liberal stronghold with average family income spanning the gamut from among the highest in Canada, in Westmount itself, to among the lowest in some of the inner-city areas it encompasses.

Canadian astronaut Marc Garneau is the Liberal star candidate in the riding. The former president of the Canadian Space Agency ran as the Liberal candidate for the first time in 2005 in Vaudreuil-Solanges. He is also an officer of the Order of Canada.

Heenan Blaikie lawyer Guy Dufort is campaigning for the Conservative Party in Westmount-Ville-Marie. Dufort was an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party and served as president for the Quebec wing under both Jean Charest and Joe Clark. His practice focuses on litigation, labour and employment law and aboriginal law. He ran as a Conservative in the Hull-Aylmer riding in the 2000 general election.

The NDP is hoping former CBC radio journalist Anne Lagace Dowson will win the party a seat in Westmount-Ville-Marie in much the same way NDP MP Thomas Mulcair had a surprise win in the Outremont byelection in Sept. 2007.

Dowson is an award-winning broadcaster and was a member of the Senate of the University of Ottawa. She served as the vice-president of the teaching assistants' union at Carleton University and was a parent member of the Governing Board of Bancroft School.

Bloc Quebecois' Charles Larivee is the youngest candidate in the riding but nonetheless has political experi-

ence under his belt. He was president of various student organizations at McGill University including its separatist party that supported the Bloc Quebecois and the Parti Quebecois.

Running for the the Green Party is another Quebec celebrity: Claude William Genest. He's the founder of the Green Mountain Permaculture Institute where he teaches earth repair and ecological design. Genest was appointed deputy leader of the party in November 2006 and has previously served in the Greens' shadow cabinet as critic for ecological economics. He is also an Emmy-nominated television actor and presenter and the son of Quebec actor Emile Genest.



Outremont

Outremont, in central Montreal covers not only the affluent Outremont neighbourhood but also stretches into the low-income and ethnically diverse neighbourhood of Cote-des-Neiges. In 2007, the NDP swept a byelection in the riding with Thomas Mulcair, breaking the riding's near 100 per cent history of voting Liberal.

Incumbent Mulcair was first elected as a Liberal in 1994. He

served as minister of sustainable development from 2003 to 2006 and is the author of Quebec's Sustainable Development Law. A lawyer by training, he switched to the NDP in 2007.

The Liberals are running someone who will be recognizable to many Quebecers who own a television: Sebastien Dhavernas, a comedian, director, singer-songwriter, acting teacher, artistic director, sound director, and producer. He's appeared in *Le Temps d'une Paix*, *Chop Suey*, *Urgence*, *Watatatow*, *Tribu.com* et *Virginie*. Conservative cuts to arts spending spurred his first foray into politics.

A young entrepreneur and businessman, Lulzim Laloshi is the Conservative Party candidate. Laloshi has a background in computer science and project management and marketing. He runs his own business and says his priorities are the environment, multiculturalism and immigration issues.

A lawyer with a background in criminal and family law, Marcella Valdivia is running for the Bloc Quebecois. She was a member of a Montreal committee looking at issues of cultural communities and racial profiling and went to Colombia with Lawyers without Borders in 2006.

Francois Pilon, aka Mr. Clothesline, is running for the Greens in this riding. He's been living in Cote-des-Neiges since 1980 and says he's "just an ordinary guy who's really tired of all the scams and double-meaning speeches from politicians." He's been installing clotheslines in Montreal for the last 20 years. It's the third time Pilon is presenting himself for the Greens in Outremont.



Jeanne-Le Ber

This riding, in the southwest corner of the Island of Montreal, has been held by the Bloc Quebecois' Thierry St-Cyr since 2006 when he beat incumbent Liza Frulla. Jeanne-Le Ber includes lower-income areas such as Verdun and Pointe-St-Charles and the more affluent

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residential area of Nun's Island. Almost 17 per cent of the population have a university degree, but at the same time, almost 13 per cent have less than a Grade 9 education.

St-Cyr, a former engineer, has spent the past two years as Bloc spokesman for immigration, youth, and sovereignty. He has a background in administration and teaching.

A real estate broker is running for the Conservatives. Daniel Beaudin has sat on numerous boards in the area, including the Yvon Lamarre Foundation and acted as president of CLSC St-Henri's Foundation for 5 Years. He ran for a seat at city council in the 2005 municipal election for the Verdun borough.

Daniel Breton is the New Democrat candidate. He's worked in television and film as an artistic director and in public affairs radio. He's the co-founder of the Parti Vert du Québec, helped organize the first march against the military intervention in Afghanistan and was the PVQ candidate in 2002 in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

The Liberal Party candidate is Christian Feuillet, founder and manager of his own publishing company, which handles general literary projects. A native of France, he is also president of Auroville

International Canada, which promotes the development of the ecological city of Auroville in Southern India.

Occupational therapist and first time campaigner Véronik Sansoucy is running for the Greens.



NDG-Lachine

Marlene Jennings is running as the incumbent in the Liberal stronghold of NDG-Lachine. She defeated the Bloc Québécois candidate by over 10,000 votes to win her fourth term in office in 2006. She is the first black woman from Quebec to be elected to the House of Commons. Jennings is the deputy house leader and served as justice critic. Her background is in law and policing. She backed current Liberal leader Stéphane Dion in his leadership bid.

This riding is located in the south central part of Montreal. Dorval Airport as well as the Concordia University-Loyola Campus are both in the riding. Liberal Warren Allmand, currently a city councillor in CDN-NDG, won here in 1965 and served as MP until 1997, a total of nine terms.

Running for the Conservatives is lawyer Carmine Pontillo, a son of Italian immigrants. Prior to becoming an attorney, Pontillo worked as a train conductor and was a regular crew-member of the commuter trains on the Dorion-Montreal rail line that runs through Montreal West, Lachine and Dorval.

Peter Deslauriers is running on the NDP ticket in the riding. He holds degrees in economics and political science from McGill University and a masters in art history from Concordia University. He's a professor at Dawson College and a member the teacher's union there.

Jessica Gal is running for the second time for the Green Party. The 33-year-old native Montrealer is one of the founding members of the present incarnation of the Green Party of Quebec, and in 2003's provincial elections obtained the highest percentage of votes in the party as candidate in NDG-Lachine.

Eric Taillefer is running for the

Bloc Québécois, a party that traditionally limps into second place in this riding. He's a secondary school teacher currently studying law at UQAM.



Papineau

The Papineau riding in central Montreal is the smallest federal riding in Canada, covering only nine square kilometres. Its residents have at one time elected both Camilien Houde as an independent and Guy Favreau as a Liberal.

The riding is a mix of row housing, apartments, small shops, and Chabanel Street clothing manufacturers and has the third lowest average family income in Canada. Unemployment is well above the Canadian average.

In this election, Bloc Québécois

incumbent Vivian Bardot will be fighting Justin Trudeau, running for the Liberals. Bardot is a former college professor and union leader, and was the president-director general of the Fédération des femmes du Québec. She was first elected in this traditionally Liberal riding in 2006.

Trudeau, a teacher by training, is the eldest son of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau. He is well-known as a speaker on youth and environmental issues and has worked with numerous groups dedicated to the protection of our Canadian heritage.

Mustaque Sarker is running for the Conservative Party. He's a businessman fluent in six languages and has been involved in grassroots federal politics since 1985. He is running in the riding for the third time. In 1996, Sarker received the Good Canadian Citizen Award of Saint Denis in recognition of his contributions to the community.

Ingrid Hein, a writer and web project manager, is the Green Party candidate. She's focused on social issues and community development. She was also a journalist with the Montreal weekly Hour newspaper.

The NDP is running Costa Zafiroopoulos in Papineau. ♠

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David T. Jones

David Jones is a former senior counselor at the American Embassy in Ottawa. He is a well-known columnist contributing frequently to many publications including The Hill Times. He writes from his home in Arlington, Virginia.

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PERSONAL NARRATIVES VS PUBLIC POLICY

Sarah Palin and exceeding expectations

On November 3, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin accepted the Republican nomination for Vice President. Her selection on August 31 by Senator John McCain had prompted a tsunami of "Sarah Who?" instant analysis.

A 44-year old, mother of five with limited electoral/executive responsibility, she was even less known than Senator Joseph Biden from tiny Delaware whose 30 years in Washington had resulted in experience that was largely applauded "inside the beltway."

Having totally baffled the predictions of all prognosticators, she simply had to be the wrong choice. The warts on her once-upon-a-time beauty queen appeal were instant revelations, particularly the unwed pregnancy of her 17 year-old daughter. Republicans were faced with an attempt to make lemonade from this lemon blossom.

Prior to her speech, there was a rather grim circle-the-wagons defensiveness by Republicans. Apprehensive convention delegates were in a put-a-good-face-on-it stance. Nor was the "family portrait" behind her anything like the Republican stereotype standard: union member husband; son about to be deployed to Iraq; pregnant daughter with gum-chewing swain-to-be (and no evidence of the father's shotgun); and the youngest daughter often holding her Downs-syndrome afflicted 4-month old brother, occasionally smoothing his hair.



She was all set up for failure. The critics had written their leads: a "beauty contest" winner stumbling over her script; someone to be "pitied" because she was "out of her depth" (and thus proving that her inexperience would be fatal in every dimension). They anticipated that, at best, she would be flat—"overwhelmed by the moment" and a semi-paralyzed "deer in the headlights" from the exposure of speaking to a national audience far

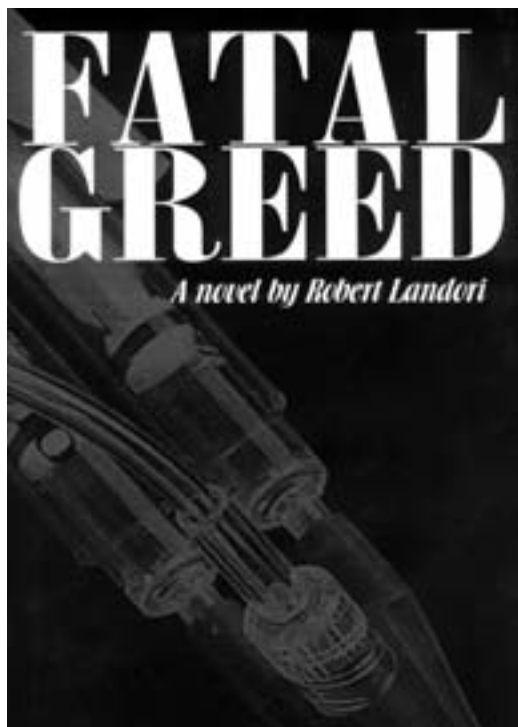
larger than the population of her state.

They got something far different: a smiling tigress (with a good speech writer) willing to put new twists into a personalized campaign. Hers was a clear riposte to Obama's contemptuous August 28 comments about McCain—and a reminder that the denizens of glass houses throw stones at their peril. And having received more than a few brickbats through her "windows," she respon-

The right vs Obama: spinfactors

- If you grow up in Hawaii, raised by your grandparents, you're exotic or different.
- Grow up in Alaska eating mooseburgers and you're a quintessential American story.
- If your name is Barack you're a Muslim.
- Name your children Willow, Trig and Track and you're a maverick.
- Graduate from Harvard Law School and you're unpredictable and possibly unworthy.
- Attend five different small colleges before graduating and you're well-rounded.
- Spend three years as a very successful community organizer, become the first black president of the *Harvard Law Review*, create a voter registration drive that elists 150,000 new voters, spend 12 years as a constitutional law professor, spend eight years as a state Senator representing a district with over 750,000 people, become Chairman of the state senate's Health and Human Services Committee, spend four years in the United States senate representing a state of 13 million people while sponsoring 131 bills and serving on the Foreign Affairs, Environment & Public Works and Veteran's Affairs committees, and you don't have any 'real' experience.
- Be local weather girl, then spend four years on the town council, six years as the mayor of a town with just under 7,000 people, 20 months as the Governor of a state of 650,000 people, and you're obviously qualified to be next in line to a 72 year-old presidential candidate with cancer and who won't let anyone see his medical records.
- If you've been married to the same woman for 19 years while raising two daughters and attending Protestant church on a regular basis, you're questionable as a good Christian.
- If you teach sex education that includes birth control you are eroding humanity.
- If you advocate abstinence as a Governor and offer no other sex-ed in your state's school system, while your unwed teen daughter winds up pregnant, you're wise and responsible.
- If your wife is a Harvard Law graduate who gives up a position in a prestigious law firm to work for the betterment of her inner-city community, then leaves that role to better raise a family, said family's values are 'out-of-touch' with ordinary Americans.
- If you're husband is nicknamed "First Dude", has at least one DWI conviction and no college education, didn't register to vote until age 25 and was once a member of a group that advocated the secession of Alaska from the greater U.S., your family represents solid American values.

Anthony Philbin, Managing Editor and Deputy Publisher



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ded in kind. She put the focus on McCain's courage, sacrifice, leadership, and independence—making the implicitly brutal point that he is the only one who has actually fought for his country. Wielding a sarcastic stiletto, she twitted Obama's self-adulation (two biographies; no legislation) and paper thin record (suggesting that a community organizer was like a small town mayor [as she was] but without responsibility).

Her articulate cleverness doesn't add an ounce to her "weight" in foreign relations or national security affairs—an almost "unbearable

lightness." There is no question that, from the perspective of a career diplomat who spent most of his adult life engaged in foreign policy/national security, Sarah Palin has essentially no/no credentials in these areas. That troubles one—and would be defining disqualification were she running for president. (In honesty, the virtual absence of such experience regarding Obama also troubles all except the totally partisan.)

Nor does the much touted reputation of Senator Joe Biden as a foreign affairs expert compute—unless your computations are those

of ritualistic liberals. For example, Biden voted against U.S. action to liberate Kuwait; voted for the Iraq war; and then against the "Surge"—an indicative trifecta of error. And garnering about 9,000 votes in the Democratic primaries versus Hillary Clinton's 18 million is a measure of his electoral popularity.

Potentially she offers McCain a threefer: fer independence highlights McCain's independent, "beyond party" streak and helps move past charges that he is "Bush III"; her lack of experience highlights Obama's own relative lack of experience; she seems to be a post-feminist woman

—comfortable simultaneously with being feminine, motherly, and professional.

Governor Palin in some respects could be a Canadian woman, comfortable in Whitehorse or Yellowknife; she is certainly closer to the tough, smart, practical women "north of 60" who do not swoon at the sight of a rifle, know that food doesn't come in Saran-wrapped grocery store packages, and appreciate that there is life 100 meters beyond Parliament Hill.

But in the end, if the Veep choices are largely irrelevant; it is the voter judgment of McCain and Obama

that is determinative. You know that McCain won't break; won't panic; and won't quit. He has bottom line principles for which he would quite literally die than abandon. Such may also be true for Obama, but it is still to be revealed. This is going to be a very unpleasant two months; the Republicans could run a perfect campaign—but the Democrats still have to work very hard to lose. Still, by not stumbling over the first hurdle, Palin has kept Republicans in the race. ♣

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REGARD SUR LES PRÉSIDENTIELLES AMÉRICAINES

L'orateur et le guerrier

Que la guerre commence ! Ce qui nous a tenus en haleine pendant la course à l'investiture démocrate aux États-Unis, c'était le dilemme concernant la possibilité d'une femme comme présidente ou celle d'un Afro-américain. Les dés sont désormais jetés et le combat sera tout autre. L'orateur contre le guerrier. L'idée elle-même plane depuis quelque temps. Barack Obama connaît un talent indiscutable pour l'art oratoire, alors que John McCain est quant à lui beaucoup plus familier avec le terrain politique. Cependant, au-delà des personnalités, résident les symboles ou encore l'intensité symbolique que chacun des tandems incarnent à la fois parfaitement et avec ambiguïté.

Le guerrier

Le Viêt-Nam dans le corps, John Sidney McCain a connu la guerre et ses ravages, tant sur le terrain que dans les classes politiques américaines. Le personnage s'impose avec son expérience et un réseau densément cohésif. Encore, il demeurerait l'attraction principale de la course jusqu'à ce que l'Alaska s'en mêle. Mais McCain n'est pas Bush, une étiquette sauvagement collée sur sa veste. Plutôt ingénieux, McCain a-t-il tenté de reconstruire à la sauce républicaine le mariage raté de Clinton-Obama ?

En tout cas, la sauce semble épicée. De la National Rifle Association (NRA) au discours pro-vie, la colistière Sarah Palin ne mâche pas ses mots. Voilà comment

voler la vedette à un vétéran du Viêt-Nam, en s'imposant comme la femme ordinaire qui a toutes les chances d'accéder au bureau ovale. Elle a même réussi à modifier le discours du candidat républicain qui désormais, semble-t-il, s'incline devant la lutte contre l'avortement et préfère le forage de pétrole sur les côtés américaines, positions qu'il n'avait jamais réellement soutenues.

Depuis, l'encre coule au sujet de cette outsider ultraconservatrice, qui n'est pas si loin du pouvoir proprement dit. Et c'est sans doute à ce niveau que les possibilités ont été réfléchies. Des scénarios qui en effraient certains et en font rire d'autres. L'âge de McCain, jusqu'à preuve du contraire, ne pose pas problème. Qu'advient-il d'un décès subit d'un futur premier président le plus âgé de l'histoire des États-Unis, sachant qu'une dame aussi controversée se retrouverait alors à la présidence ? Question sans



réponse bien sûr, mais qui semble avoir touché tout le monde.

L'orateur

L'autre cas de figure semble beaucoup plus animer la curiosité. C'est celui du premier Afro-américain de l'histoire à s'être hissé jusqu'à la nomination de son parti pour la Maison Blanche. Une histoire américaine qui, nous le savons, est loin d'avoir la blancheur du coton. De l'esclavage à la lutte

pour les droits civiques, les États-Unis ont connu plus de fragmentations sociales que de réelles cohésions.

Outre cette toile de fond, une question surgit au sujet de ce tenant du rêve de Luther King. Qu'advient-il si le prochain président était John McCain ? Ou, plus clairement, que signifierait une éventuelle perte de l'élection par Obama ? Diverses interprétations semblent évoquer un certain danger.

Mais il ne faudrait pas alors crier trop vite au racisme. On le sait, les élections américaines ce sont des guerres de tranchées. Il faudrait donc centrer notre attention sur le personnage, tout en tentant compte du symbole, de l'image et du mythe.

En somme, si Obama perdait sa mise, ce ne serait pas une défaite sociale ou un recul avant les années 1960. Et, surtout, il n'y aurait pas lieu de se poser la question

Bref, si Barack Obama ne réussit pas à passer le test, il faudra prendre du recul et se demander notamment s'il ne s'agit pas d'une défaite personnelle ou d'une déficience stratégique dans la campagne démocrate. Ou encore, ce sera peut-être la manifestation de l'essoufflement du symbole qu'il aura su incarner. Obama, par son parcours, a prouvé qu'il est bel et bien un homme avant d'être un Afro-américain et il n'incarnera jamais l'image de la victime historique.



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pernicieuse : « Étaient-ils prêts à élire un président Noir ? » Bref, si Barack Obama ne réussit pas à passer le test, il faudra prendre du recul et se demander notamment s'il ne s'agit pas d'une défaite personnelle ou d'une déficience stratégique dans la campagne démocrate. Ou encore, ce sera peut-être la manifestation de l'essoufflement du symbole qu'il aura su incarner. Obama, par son parcours, a prouvé qu'il est bel et bien un homme avant d'être un Afro-américain et il n'incarnera jamais l'image de la victime historique. ♣



Robert Presser

ÉCONOMIE

TRADE OFF

The Calm Before the Trade Storm

This November will mark 20 years since the historic election of 1988, when free trade with the United States dominated the debate. The Conservatives emerged from that election with a reduced minority and proceeded to enact the agreement that had been negotiated with the US. At the time, many Canadians believed that free trade threatened the Canadian healthcare system and that the deal would give the US unimpeded access to our natural resources, including water. At the same time across the border, the US was threatening that if the deal failed, there would be severe repercussions on the sustainability of Canada-US trade. Members of Congress were planning to use Section 301 of the US Trade Act to impose unilateral tariffs and restrictions on Canadian goods crossing the border.

Our passage of the FTA avoided testing Congress' resolve to attempt punitive actions against Canada. In the 20 years since, two-way trade between Canada and the United States has more than doubled, and Canadian manufacturers benefitted overall from the privileged relationship, regardless of intermittent irritants like the softwood lumber dispute. For those unfamiliar with the numbers, I will make it simple for you. In a typical month, Canada exports \$45 billion in goods to the US and imports \$40 billion in return, netting us a tidy surplus of \$5 billion a month or \$60 billion a year. The

resilience of Canada's exporters is impressive, given the rise in the Canadian dollar since 2002; while the mix has skewed in favour of natural resources at the expense of manufactured goods, our manufacturing sector has held up much better than that of the US; even the Canadian auto sector has done better than its US counterpart.

All this may change quickly if Barack Obama becomes president, especially if he receives significant support from rust-belt states like Michigan and Ohio, badly hit by the US manufacturing recession and the loss of lower value jobs to China. During the primaries against Senator Hillary Clinton, Obama courted support in these states by openly declaring that he would seek to renegotiate NAFTA (the FTA successor that includes Mexico) to protect American jobs. A minor scandal erupted when a senior Obama insider briefed Canadian officials and indicated that this was only for populist consumption during the primaries, and that Obama would undertake no such action as president. We have not heard any negative trade comments directed against Canada since that time, but Obama and Biden continue to court votes in states where manufacturing is suffering, saying that they will act to preserve American jobs and end "unfair" trade practices.

Canada will not be immune to such initiatives, even if many of these

veiled threats are primarily directed at low cost-producers like China. If John McCain wins, he is likely to do so without the support of Michigan (though he will have to win Ohio) and his reputation as a committed free-trader means that a renegotiation of NAFTA is unlikely. If Obama wins big, he is likely to carry all the traditional northeastern "blue" Democratic states, as well as most of the border states with Canada (Montana and North Dakota will remain Republican). It is conceivable that Obama's coattails will produce significant Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. Should that occur, all the newly minted members of Congress who ran on job preservation for their electors will expect

the Executive branch to deliver on its campaign promise of trade reform.

Earlier I mentioned Section 301 of the 1974 US Trade Act. It was referred to as Super 301 for a reason; it empowered Congress and/or the Executive to propose punitive tariff and non-tariff measures against its trade partners and allow the devastating economic effects to take place as it negotiated agreements more to its liking. Super 301 was allowed to lapse in 2001 and was not renewed; this does not mean that an anti-trade US Congress could not vote to reinstate the clause in an effort to scare its trading partners into making concessions, without even using the measures available in the statute. You can Google Section 301 and read the

that Chretien promised to rip it up when he ran for the leadership in 1990. In short, the Liberals have enough problems without opening another front against a brainy economist like Stephen Harper. Harper wants to maintain the rhetorical peace with the Obama campaign that was negotiated after the skirmish during the primaries.

What of the New Democrats and the Bloc? Even the NDP knows that everyone loses in a trade war, and they would prefer not to radicalize their union base into making inflammatory statements that would scare off the centrist voters that they are trying to attract. The NDP has discovered that the environment makes a more compelling unifying

The Conservatives are selling competence, and Harper does not want to legitimize the notion that trade with the US is an emerging issue since that would spill over into the US race and force Obama to make populist statements which would be difficult to disown once elected. The Liberals are too busy selling the Green Shift and don't want to remind Canadians that they opposed the FTA 20 years ago and that Chretien promised to rip it up when he ran for the leadership in 1990.

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statue on the website of the US Department of Commerce; it is a compact statute, written in understandable English, and very, very scary to anyone who understands the importance of reciprocal trade between the US and Canada.

By now you have noticed that Canada is involved in a federal election as well. Since trade has been a major issue in the US election since the primaries, one would expect that the federal parties would be spending some time on it up here as well. Nope!

No federal party wants to touch this one because the reality is that Canada is not the driver on the trade issue when we transact with an economy 10 times the size of our own. The Conservatives are selling competence, and Harper does not want to legitimize the notion that trade with the US is an emerging issue since that would spill over into the US race and force Obama to make populist statements which would be difficult to disown once elected. The Liberals are too busy selling the Green Shift and don't want to remind Canadians that they opposed the FTA 20 years ago and

issue than trade. The Bloc would prefer to portray Harper as a devil and campaign to deny the Tories a majority, rather than invite an investigation into how well Quebec has fared (relatively speaking) since the advent of the FTA. If the Greens have a trade policy, then it is in its infancy and has yet to be vetted.

So, we have cross border and intra-Canadian collusion to avoid trade as a major issue, at least until November 4th and all the elections have concluded. The risk is that if the US economy remains weak and unemployment continues to grow, the political pressure for expedient action may be so great that the new President will be unable to resist. We should all expect that 2009 will bring tensions across the border; expect manufacturing, the tar sands, other natural resources and even water(!) to be on the table as the US seeks to redefine the trading relationship that has greatly benefitted both nations for two decades. It will take great imagination and political skill to avoid a trade tragedy and a deeper economic recession than the one we are experiencing today. ♣

SOCIETY



Dan Delmar

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PRECAUTION OR PANIC?

Inspectors wreak havoc on fromageries

The province's food inspection agency is in the midst of a zealous, unprecedented raid on Quebec cheese shops. Their mission: To seek and destroy any piece of cheese that has had even the most harmless flirtation with the sometimes harmful *Listeria* bacteria.

Owners of some Montreal fromageries are devastated after officials from the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) forced them earlier this month to throw out every single piece of cheese that was not in its original packaging. Some 300 shops province-wide with the misfortune of having encouraged Quebec's dairy industry were sought out based on client lists from the makers of tainted cheese and tens of thousands of dollars later, their stock is presumed to be safe for consumption.

The drastic measures came on the heels of a Canada-wide recall of tainted cold cuts made by Maple Leaf Foods. This time, soft cheeses made by Médard de St-Gédéon of Lac-St-Jean and Ste-Sophie's Fromagiers de la Table Ronde were

the culprit.

"It was just an overreaction because of the issues with Maple Leaf," said Dr. Joe Schwarcz, the Director of McGill University's Office for Science and Society. "There was no reason to throw it all out. It's not warranted and it hasn't caused me to change what I eat."

The MAPAQ's Gouda Gestapo was particularly cruel with Gilles Jourdenais, owner of la Fromagerie Atwater. He was forced to chuck \$100,000-worth of cheese into the trash; no recourse, no appeals process and, more importantly, no insurance.

"They panicked and went on a wild goose chase," Jourdenais told *The Métropolitain*. "We tried for four hours to negotiate with the inspector, but his orders were clear: Search and destroy. We even tried begging, but in the end, logic had nothing to do with it."

Ahmed El Seweify, the owner of a smaller Atwater Market fromagerie, was also hit hard: He had to toss inventory totalling \$30,000.

"C'est exagéré!" said El Seweify, whose family has been in the cheese

business for 40 years. "Nous sommes perdants mais nous avons rien à cacher. Notre magasin est toujours propre."

Merchants said it was understandable to throw out cheeses that came from the same manufacturers as the ones found to be contaminated, but to destroy all the other brands was completely illogical. Knives, slicers and cutting-boards can all be sanitized with alcohol-based cleaners to virtually eliminate the risk of cross-contamination. The MAPAQ inspectors could also have simply quarantined the cheeses and ran tests instead of assuming all of the stock was tainted.

"We would have agreed to close our store for a couple of days, pulled everything into quarantine and done testing," said Jourdenais, a third-generation fromager. "I'm positively sure that we threw away good product. I could have given it away."

Ian Picard, co-owner of the five fromagerie Hamel outlets in the province, was forced to destroy 2,500 kilos worth roughly \$120,000. In Hamel's nearly half-century in business, he said the raids are a first. He said his fromager friends in France were also shocked by the scope of the operation.

"Je trouve ça vraiment très gros comme mesure pour protéger la santé publique," he said.

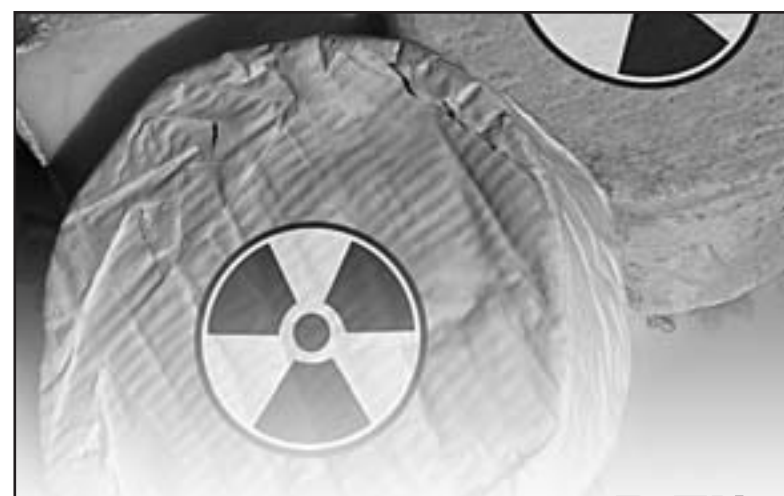
The outbreak has killed one Quebecer and sickened 22. Six pregnant women gave birth prematurely; one woman had a miscarriage that was blamed on Listeriosis. That was the "panic point" for health inspectors in Quebec, said Jourdenais.

"Je comprends si les produits en question doivent être détruits," said Picard, "mais pas tout les produits autour."

Picard is so cheesed that he's helped found l'Association des marchands fromager du Québec to stick up for boutiques like his who are helpless in the face of an all-powerful bureaucratic machine. He said a class-action lawsuit is a possibility, but nothing has been decided yet. Both Jourdenais and El Seweify told *The Métropolitain* that they can't wait for their day in court.

The MAPAQ is defending their actions. A spokesperson was unavailable for comment, but in a communiqué, the agency said the measures were necessary and increased scrutiny has led them to investigate nine other Quebec cheese-makers who may not have complied with safety guidelines.

"Les autorités du MAPAQ sont convaincues que les mesures



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- Le Fou du Roy
- Le Rassembleu

* Actually, according to Dr. Joe Schwarcz (Director, McGill University's Office for Science and Society), you may only get a stomach ache and the runs, unless you have a weakened immune system or are pregnant. If you are with-child, it is standard practice for doctors to discourage consumption of these kinds of soft, unpasteurized cheeses to begin with.

Outbreaks are exceedingly rare. There are, on average, only 30 food poisoning deaths per year in Canada, blamed on *Listeria*, *Salmonella* and other "bad" bacteria. But raw milk cheeses also contain "good" bacteria, which can fight off the bad (cheeses aged for at least six months foster the good stuff).

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exceptionnelles mises en place au cours des derniers jours permettent de prévenir une hausse des cas rapportés à la Santé publique, voire même de sauver des vies."

The agency's latest move suggests a softer approach may have been warranted to begin with: Jourdenais' shop was paid another heart-stopping visit last Friday, but this time inspectors simply seized the cheese for testing and did not jump the gun by throwing it all in the trash. If tests come back negative for Listeriosis, he will have his stock back in less than one week.

"I'm a cheese fanatic, an aficionado. I love what I do," Jourdenais said. "For fifteen years we've been promoting Quebec cheeses and in one weekend, [the MAPAQ] has completely screwed it up for us. People will now think raw

milk cheeses are dangerous, and that's bullshit. They're actually less of a concern."

"When you pasteurize cheese, it takes away all the bacteria," he explained. "Bad" bacteria are fought off by "good" bacteria.

"We don't live in a sterile environment. Bacteria are everywhere," said Schwarcz. "No matter what you do, you can't prevent this type of thing from happening sometimes."

Quebec cheeses have been heavily promoted by the dairy industry in recent years and Jourdenais said it's up to the MAPAQ to undo the damage they've done.

"They have to do more to help Quebec producers and give us retailers the tools to explain to customers what's going on," he said. "This is going to hurt. They have a major reconstruction job to do." ♦

PIPERBERG'S WORLD



Ideas before identities.
Justice before orthodoxy.

THE MÉTROPOLITAIN



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UPCOMING FUNDRAISER FOR MONTREAL CHARITIES



Stars give of themselves for "Cassandra's Lilacs" concert

Jazz great Ranée Lee is the latest performer to join the star-studded lineup for the "Cassandra's Lilacs" Gentle the Condition concert to be held Oct. 2 at 7.30 p.m. at Théâtre St. Denis. The concert is being staged by the Garceau Foundation in co-operation with the Institute for Public Affairs of Montreal. It will benefit three Montreal charities that are in the forefront on issues of health, hunger and homelessness. Lee, already well known to audiences throughout North America and Europe, has just come off a brilliant portrayal of "Lady Day" - Billie Holiday. Ranée Lee is truly a virtuoso whose talent has captured - and captivated - audiences in clubs, on stage, and on screen. She even shines in the classroom, teaching music at McGill and Laval universities. Chantal Chamandy burst onto the music scene with a multilingual first CD entitled Love Needs You and followed that up with a stunning concert at the pyramids in Giza, making her one of a handful of artists that includes Sting, who have staged concerts there. Stephanie Biddle is the golden voice of the storied Biddle musical family of Montreal. She has forged a stellar career in New York, and is flying in for this special evening. Lorraine Klaasen, originally from South Africa, has captivated jazz and African music lovers the world over. She is a virtual embodiment of cultural diversity singing in English, French, Greek, Hebrew, and more than 12 African languages and dialects. Vancouver's Nazanin Afshin-Jam is the former Miss World Canada who has devoted her life to international human rights. Her debut CD is entitled Someday - whose title song is a condemnation of Iranian religious fanaticism as well as a paean of hope for the future. The album is a captivating combination of folk-rock and sensual ballads.

Ashley King will be launching her first CD in Los Angeles in October. The multi-talented singer's pure sounds and relaxing rhythms have

been called seductive. Sandra Brandone has just released her first CD entitled "Nothing Feels As Good". A single, Letting Go, has already gone 2008 Quebec platinum.

All the artists are performing free of charge for the benefit of the remarkable organizations the concert is supporting. Dr. Nicholas Steinmetz' and Dr. Gilles Julien's Fondation pour la promotion de la pédiatrie sociale tackles the health needs of poor children. Helping thousands in Montreal's poorest areas of Côte des Neiges and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the Fondation cares for the physical, psychological and educational needs of children who are products of underprivileged homes. It not only provides immediate help, but follows the children through years of schooling to ensure that the work is having an effect. It is a totally holistic approach to childhood development. The Maison du partage d'Youville is a community kitchen and food bank that has served hundreds every week over the past 25 years in Pointe St. Charles, Verdun and Little Burgundy. It is straining for space and resources and is in desperate need of funds to move to larger, but cheaper, premises so that it can continue its critical work.

De la Rue...à la Réussite, takes homeless men and women and provides them with the necessary tools and employment opportunities to reintegrate into the workforce. This remarkable organization, founded by the indefatigable Sue McDougall and her late husband Jean-Pierre Chartrand, doesn't just get people on their feet, it gets them back into life. It understands that it's about more than just getting people a paycheck; it's about giving them back their purpose.

Activist attorney Brigitte Garceau created The Garceau Foundation out of a desire to provide the highest level of financial, professional and organizational support to frontline community action and social service groups tackling our most daunting social challenges. The need for the

most effective intervention on behalf of these groups, already operating with strained resources, will become ever more acute. Brigitte believes none of us can stay uninvolved. Building on the philosophy that to whom much is given, much is expected, she is bringing years of experience in political and community networking and fundraising to bear on this mission.

Inspired by a real-life Cassandra - Garceau's ten year old daughter - who wanted to do something to help the underprivileged, the symbolism of the lilac is poignant and pithy. Like children, the most vulnerable and fragile among us, each lilac flower alone is beautiful but fragile. But together in a bough, lilacs are not only fragrant, but strong. Each child alone is fragile. But if we look at them together, we are compelled by their needs and find the strength to accomplish the unimaginable. Together, we can gentle the condition.

This event will take place under the patronage of a very special Presidente d'honneur - Andrée Ruffo. For decades Ruffo has been the outstanding voice in Quebec, and perhaps unparalleled in the country, in defense of our most vulnerable and disenfranchised. Her particular passion was young people. As a youth court judge she not only showed compassion from the bench but commitment in the public arena. Few were as brave as she in demonstrating that when the system fails we as citizens must step in. That toeing the line is like doing a crime. Her book, "Parce que je crois aux enfants" is not only an indictment of apathy but an eloquent appeal for action.

The concert will not only be about entertainment. You will meet the people behind these groups and you will meet the people they help. We hope you will be touched as you meet the most humble among us who cannot secure the preferences of

the privileged for themselves. We hope you will be touched enough to give of your time and talent as well as your treasure.

I assure you that the music, the words and the images of this concert will pierce your heart. We want you to take away from it a greater ability to see the world through the eyes of its victims. And to understand intuitively, that the less educated are not less intelligent and that the less affluent are not any less human. That is what Cassandra's Lilacs "Gentle the Condition" concert is all about, and what the Garceau Foundation seeks to achieve. Please help. ♡



But if we look at them together, we are compelled by their needs and find the strength to accomplish the unimaginable. Together, we can *gentle the condition.*

For tickets:

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A \$250 VIP ticket entitles you to attend the wrap party at LaMouche, one block south of the theatre on St. Denis. **General admission tickets are \$150** and can be purchased by calling Théâtre St-Denis at 514-849-4211. Direct credit card purchases can be made through Tel-Spec at 514-790-1111. All contributions are tax deductible.



Michel-Wilbrod Bujold

M-W. Bujold est écrivain.

LES BAGARRES DANS LE HOCKEY JUNIOR QUÉBÉCOIS

L'affaire n'est pas tout à fait hockey : *Deuxième période*

Les irresponsables de la Ligue de Hockey Junior Majeur du Québec font encore face à tout un défi : comment rendre moins évident que des brutes en habits et cravates doivent amener des délinquants en chandails à numéros à manquer de respect à leurs adversaires pour maintenir à tout prix cette «volonté de gagner».

Voici comment le ou les auteurs du rapport du comité consultatif au commissaire de la Ligue énonce cette subtile problématique dans ses principes directeurs : « De nouvelles règles de conduite et d'éthique, devant s'ajouter à la réglementation en vigueur, ainsi que des mesures disciplinaires doivent être énoncées et rigoureusement appliquées, à chaque fois que seront confondues la robustesse propre à ce sport et la violence délibérée.»

Il ressort de cet extrait que la violence au hockey est plus une affaire de politique qu'une question de culture. On accepte la violence, mais jusqu'à un certain point... Et si ces gestionnaires de la violence modérée peuvent faire appel au fatalisme trompeur de la culture de la violence au hockey, c'est parce qu'il en est de même au hockey depuis ses origines. La formule payante de ce sport-spectacle a toujours été basée sur l'exploitation d'un produit culturel où se mélangent la finesse et la brutalité («brain and brawn»). Il a toujours été viable de faire sentir la présence de cette «robustesse», tout en sauvant la face de cette violence dont on dit encore qu'elle ferait partie de ce jeu de bâtons et rondelle.

Le rapport nous donne des exemples de «violence délibérée»,

En réalité, c'est tout le hockey comme jeu de contacts qui est mis en échec pour laisser libre cours au hockey comme sport-de-contacts où la rudesse se meut derrière «la robustesse».

dont «les assauts par derrière». On ne parle toutefois pas d'assauts par devant... On ne se poserait sûrement pas la question de savoir en quoi l'assaut par devant serait une violence moins délibérée que celle d'un assaut par derrière. Et pourtant, les collisions frontales, volontaires ou non, ne sont pas rares dans ce sport extrême d'inconduites. Or, TOUT se passe à ce niveau.

Depuis le début des années

soixante, le hockey s'est en quelque sorte civilisé. Il a institué la règle de la mise au jeu: en bons gentlemen, les deux miseurs acceptent, depuis lors, de croiser leurs bâtons autour de la rondelle sans possibilité d'assaut... Mais, après le coup de sifflet, tous les coups sont permis et...punis. Les punitions, suspensions et expulsions n'allant pratiquement jamais jusqu'à l'exclusion. Une fois la rondelle en jeu, le

joueur n'a même plus besoin de se servir d'abord de son bâton pour faire perdre le contrôle de la rondelle à son adversaire. Il n'a qu'à le mettre en échec ; ce qu'on appelle si justement, une «mise en échec».

En réalité, c'est tout le hockey comme jeu de contacts qui est mis en échec pour laisser libre cours au hockey comme sport-de-contacts où la rudesse se meut derrière «la robustesse». À la suite du rapport Néron (1978), lequel n'avait trouvé rien de mieux que d'imposer le port du casque protecteur pour discipliner la violence au hockey junior, ce rapport-bidon ne franchit pas le test de ses principes directeurs. Dès le départ, il perd toute crédibilité et toute authenticité en énonçant un mensonge majeur du hockey junior : « La tolérance de la violence n'a pas sa place dans le hockey junior, et ne l'a jamais eue.»

Pour faire en sorte que la face de leur politique de gestion de la violence puisse être sauvée, la petite Ligue s'est assurée, parmi ses quatorze «consultants», la représentativité d'un faiseur d'image ou de face-lift professionnel en la présence même du président du Bureau des gouverneurs, ainsi que celle de deux ex-hockeyeurs de la NHL qui ont dû accepter cette politique de robuste rudesse pour faire carrière...

Pour éradiquer la violence à sa racine, il aurait fallu sonder les jeunes morts... Il aurait également fallu demander leurs avis aux jeunes quadruplégiques de la «mise en échec», ces vrais punis, ces suspendus, expulsés, exclus à vie de ce jeu...

Et pendant ce temps-là, la ministre Courchesne tient toujours au bannissement des règlements de compte à poings nus, comme s'ils constituaient la quintessence des assauts par devant...

À cette politique de «volonté de gagner», il n'y aurait pourtant qu'à opposer une volonté politique de la culture du vrai jeu. ♦



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Dr. Laurie Betito with Dan Delmar

Dr. Laurie Betito is a Montreal psychologist, sex therapist and the host of "Passion" on CJAD 800

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PARENTING IN PERSPECTIVE

Bristol Palin: A walking lesson in sex education

Becoming a grandmother at the age of 44 and watching your teenage daughter bring an unplanned pregnancy to term is no cause for celebration. But that's exactly how Sarah Palin, John McCain and the Republicans are reacting to this unfortunate turn of events; they're treating it as the joyful beginnings of a young, Christian family. Are they in denial or blinded by religious fanaticism or both?

In a tragically ironic illustration of the consequences that result from conservative sexual mores, it was revealed recently that Bristol Palin, the 17-year-old daughter of the Republican Party's vice-presidential nominee, is pregnant. The father, Levi Johnston, is 18.

Both McCain and Palin are, of course, supporters of abstinence-only sex education. The philosophy behind this obsolete method of dealing with human sexuality is,

essentially, the following: the only thing kids need to know about sex is that they shouldn't be having it.

This may come as a shock to parents of teenagers everywhere who shy away from such taboo subjects at the dinner table: Your kids are horny and they, in all likelihood, will experiment. The question is, how are you going to deal with it?

The denial approach is, unfortunately, fairly common. Failing to see teens as sexual beings defies all logic because most parents will surely remember that hormonally-charged period in their own lives when they felt the need to rub up against everything that moved. It's normal. It may not be pleasant to think about, let alone discuss with your kids, but it's perfectly typical, healthy behaviour.

Bristol, one would assume, grew up in a highly conservative household that frowned upon fornication before marriage. Given her mother's public statements about sex education, it's also a safe assumption that she never had "the talk," or any talk about her sexuality. Instead of learning about the birds and the bees, Bristol could very well have been told simply that premarital sexual relations would buy her a one-way ticket to Hell. How many adventurous teens would be eager to test that highly questionable theory?

Abstinence-only sex ed simply doesn't work: there have been no proven links between it and a decrease in rates of sexual activity,



The Palins in February 2008. Bristol is at the far right.

A Passionate Call for Change.

RESCUING CANADA'S RIGHT
BLUEPRINT FOR A CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION
FOREWORD BY MARK STEIN
ADAM DAIFALLAH TASHA KHEIRIDDIN

"Tasha Kheiriddin and Adam Daifallah's analysis is bold, provocative and invigorating."
—Mark Stein

A provocative and timely call to action for civic-minded Canadians yearning for a more competitive political system and better government.

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Cambridge Middle East Studies



David Romano focuses on the Kurdish case to generally try and make sense of ethnic nationalist resurgence. In a world rent by a growing number of such conflicts, the questions posed about why, how and when such challenges to the state arise are becoming increasingly urgent.

Throughout the author analyzes these questions through the lens of social movement theory, considering in particular politico-social structures, resource mobilization strategies and cultural identity. His conclusions offer some thought-provoking insights into Kurdish nationalism, as well as into the strengths and weaknesses of various social movement theories.

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Abstinence does need to be taught in schools, but as a part of a comprehensive outlook on human sexuality. A realistic approach needs to be taken: regardless of religious beliefs, parents need to wake up and realize that their kids' health is at risk when important information about their own bodies is being withheld. When in doubt, always err on the side of providing more knowledge.

sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or teen pregnancy (in fact, some studies point to the total opposite result—an increase in risky behaviour). That is not to say, however, that abstinence in general is the wrong way to go; quite the contrary. It's the only method that is guaranteed not to result in pregnancy or an STI. Abstinence needs to be taught in all schools as a part of a comprehensive outlook on human sexuality. But a realistic approach

needs to be taken: regardless of religious beliefs, parents need to wake up and realize that their kids' health is at risk when important information about their own bodies is being withheld. When in doubt, always err on the side of knowledge.

One in five teens do not use protection during their first time; many believe that a girl cannot get pregnant while losing her virginity. By the age of 20, nearly half of all young adults will not use condoms

on a consistent basis. Cases of STIs, particularly Herpes and Chlamydia, are rising dramatically. Over 100,000 abortions are performed every year in Canada. These are troubling statistics. Not giving teens the means to reduce the risks that come with sexual activity is nothing short of irresponsible.

Every teen, when entering high school at the very latest, should be taught about their bodies in a frank and honest manner: How sex works,

how to practice it safely, how to deal with the consequences and how to avoid it, if that's their choice. Parents who believe they will figure it out on their own (or worse, learn from media) have their heads in the sand. Those who believe that sex education will give their kids ideas are misguided. And parents who believe that sex before marriage is unnatural are just on another planet altogether.

Conservative Americans, surpris-

gly, are not the only offenders when it comes to denying teens the crucial information they need to make informed decisions about sex; the Quebec government is lagging far behind many other provinces. There are no mandatory sex-ed courses and any information that teens are exposed to in the province's public high schools will typically come from their English, Math or Biology teachers, who take it upon themselves to skim over the basics. The Charest government was all too eager to teach every Quebec child about world religions at the start of the current school year, but where is that same motivation to teach them about their own bodies?

Poor Bristol was not likely to ever have been given a pack of condoms, a prescription for the pill or taught how to properly plan for a family, and the results speak for themselves. Parents everywhere would be wise to use her as an example of what happens when questions aren't answered and curiosity is not satisfied properly. The Palins' so-called "family values" clearly haven't gotten them very far; the lives of two teens have been turned upside down and it doesn't seem likely that a eighteen year old will make a half-decent father. The real culprit is not the irresponsible twerp who couldn't keep it in his pants; it's the ongoing war between religion and sex. One is man-made and the other makes man. ♦

THE VOLUNTEER

The riveting story of a Canadian who served as a senior officer in Israel's legendary Mossad.

For seven-and-a-half years, Ross worked as an undercover agent — a classic spy. In *The Volunteer*, he describes his role in missions to foil attempts by Syria, Libya, and Iran to acquire advanced weapons technology. He tells of his part in the capture of three senior al Qaeda operatives who masterminded the 1998 attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; a joint Mossad-FBI operation that uncovered a senior Hezbollah terrorist based in the United States; and a mission to South Africa in which he intercepted Iranian agents seeking to expand their country's military arsenal; and two-and-a-half years as Mossad's Counterterrorism Liaison Officer to the CIA and FBI.

Many of the operations Ross describes have never before been revealed to the public.



ARTS & STYLE



Sharman Yarnell

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THE MAN WHO SAVED STRATFORD

In fond memory of Richard Monette

At a time when funding for the arts is contracting, it is significant to note that we have also lost a man whose perseverance and creativity pulled The Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario out of deep financial debt.

Richard Jean Monette was born in Montreal in 1944 to a French-Canadian father and Italian mother. It was the latter from whom he acquired his theatrical temperament. He grew up on Durocher Street, near McGill University, speaking three languages – English, French and Italian.

He studied here, in Montreal, at Concordia University (then Loyola) and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Honours). At the age of 19, he made his professional debut as an actor playing Hamlet at Toronto's Crest Theatre. But Monette became well-known in Canada for the lead role in Michel Tremblay's play "Hosanna" – a play about a transvestite in denial of his sexual predilections. (At the time it was thought to be a metaphor for Quebec's struggle with the issue of separatism.) In 1994, Monette joined the Stratford company and during the next 15 years played Caliban, Hamlet, Romeo, Edmund, Prince Hal, Antonio and Mercutio, to name but a few. He was also on Broadway in a

short-lived play, "Soldiers," in 1968 and in 1970 he was in the original London cast of "Oh! Calcutta!"

In 1994, he took over as Artistic Director of Stratford and under his guidance the Festival flourished. He stayed for 14 seasons, making him its longest serving Artistic Director. During this time he added a fourth stage and an acting school, developed a program for promoting new plays and created a 50 million dollar endowment fund. There are those critics who would say he lowered the standards of the classically oriented roster of plays that, up until his time, were traditionally staged at Stratford. But under Monette's leadership, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival became financially profitable. In his first year as Artistic Director he turned an accumulated deficit of more than 1 million dollars into a surplus of 800,000 dollars.

Monette championed the musical at Stratford, recognizing that if the Festival was to not only survive but flourish, it had to deliver a more diverse theatrical landscape. Thus, he earned criticism from some who saw the musical as far too commercial to be staged in a venue that was solely created for classical theatre. In an interview with critic Richard

Ozounian last year, he said, "I had my priorities straight. I took care of the money, I took care of the audiences, I took care of the future."

Monette was strong. He persevered. He had no problem steering from an all traditional season to one that included musicals and comedies – and the public responded. It applauded his efforts by turning up in droves, hungry for good theatre. In the festival's 50th season in 2002, attendance reached an all-time high of nearly 700,000 visitors. Monette also promoted Canadian authors – Timothy Findlay's "Elizabeth Rex" for example, directed by Martha Henry and later made into a film, was a total success for both Stratford and Findlay.

Monette was temperamental, passionate and flamboyant. He enjoyed a good sense of humour and loved the theatre. He had a tremendous love and respect for the profession and for those serving it (although he apparently thought theatre critics to be somewhat "obtuse").

One of his last productions in 2007 was a Monty Pythonesque Comedy of Errors in which he had an actor march across the stage in a penguin suit sporting a sandwich board that read, "For the Critics". This did not stand in the way, however, of his winning the prestigious Herbert Whittaker Drama Bench Award for Outstanding Contribution to Canadian Theatre from the Canadian Drama Theatre Critics Association in 2006.

Monette expressed his passion for the theatre in more ways than one. He made headlines when he crossed the then Stratford board of governors in the chaos following Robin Phillip's 1980 resignation as artistic director. A temporary four-person actor directorate slated to replace Phillips in 1981 was replaced with British director, John Dextor. At the annual general meeting that December, Monette addressed the board members who were sitting on the stage of the Festival Theatre. He felt they had acted in an unethical manner and in no uncertain words said so. "You pig!" he shouted at Robert Hicks, then president of the board of directors. "We have spent our lives in this theatre, we have given of our time and we care about art. You talk to us about money all the time. You have no morals. I don't know how you can sleep. I care deeply and passionately about this place and you should address yourselves to your consciences and to your hearts."

Oh, yes. He cared passionately!

Monette was the recipient of the Queen's Golden and Silver Jubilee



Richard Monette as Prince Hal in Henry IV, 1979.

Photo by Zoe Dominic

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Medals, an honorary doctorate from the universities of Windsor, Western Ontario and Concordia University. He was named a Member of the Order of Canada in 1997.

Richard Jean Monette died in London, Ontario, September 9, at age 64 – far too soon. Who knows what theatrical gems his tenacious spirit, loyalty and wit would have provided us in his later years.

One can only imagine a party of thespians waiting for him (wherever it is that theatre people rest after their long journey). I can see them now, with outstretched arms and scripts at the ready – a long line of Stratford's past artists – its brilliant first great director Dr. Tyrone Guthrie, performing artists Butchie Blake, William Hutt, Susan Wright, James Mason, Alec Guinness... What a party! ♣

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Theatre review

ALEXANDRE MARINE DIRECTS NEW SEGAL CENTRE PRODUCTION

“Dangerous Liasons” is eye-filling

As *Le Vicomte de Valmont* in the Segal Centre's eye-filling production of *Dangerous Liasons*, Brett Christopher is a satin-lapelled lounge lizard with all the right moves.

Christopher's nimble performance as an amoral aristocrat and first rate cad with piercing blue eyes who lets his fingers do much of the talking dominates the Segal's lavish and lacerating staging of Christopher Hampton's play which is based on the Pierre Choderlos de Laclos novel.

Catherine de Sèvre brings chilling strength but little sexual excitement to the role of La Marquise de Merteuil, Valmont's decadent co-conspirator. It is hard to accept de Sèvre as someone who really believes a woman “can do it as often as you like with as many men as you like in as many ways as you like.”

Anyone who has seen John

Malkovitch in the movie version or Ryan Phillippe in *Cruel Intentions*—an updated film version of the same tale—is familiar with the story. These two characters don't seduce their unsuspecting victims out of any desire for sexual pleasure, but to keep score.

Among the many pleasant surprises in the Segal production are Gemma James-Smith as the virginal 15-year old, Cécile de Volanges. With her wholesome good looks, ringlets, and blushing cheeks, she is as alluring as Botticelli's *Venus*. As her mother, Madame de Volanges, Tara Nicodemo, conveys breeding and temperament. And Jake Epstein is, appropriately, naively appealing as Cécile's juvenile suitor, Le Chevalier Danceny.

Jillian Niedoba is excellent as Valmont's other conquest, the married and virtuous La Présidente de Tourvel. It is espec-

ially gratifying to see Moira Wylie's elegant turn as Valmont's aunt, Madame de Rosemonde.

Anathousa Harris is deliciously uninhibited as the courtesan, Émilie. The letter writing scene in which her derriere serves as Valmont's desk is a moment to be savoured.

Set designer's Yannik Larivée's polished black onyx and gold backdrop is a minor masterpiece of mirrored light and shadow. Furniture piled off in a corner adds to the illusion that there is nothing permanent about the handsome boudoirs; these rooms aren't designed for long term relationships, but for hasty couplings and lurid trysts.

Jessica Poirier-Chang's costumes are lustrous classics suitable for a brothel in any era and Dmitri Marine's original musical score is



good. There's not as much skin as you might expect on stage in these permissive times. Nothing about Alexandre Marine's fluid direction is vulgar or prurient. His interpretation of *Dangerous Liasons*, like the book upon which it is based, leaves a lot to

the imagination.

In a play about the destructive power of sex that's not necessarily a bad thing, *Dangerous Liasons* is at the Segal Centre for Performing Arts at the Saidye, 5170 Côte-Ste-Catherine, until Sept. 28. ♠



Louise V. Labrecque

La fonderie Darling : un espace de création unique

Notre vrai moi n'est pas tout entier en nous.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau

« Il n'y a pas plus québécois qu'un Québécois ! » Voici une maxime résumant à elle seule une québécoiserie bête à pleurer, un complexe en somme. De ce genre de cliché, de préjugé, de formule toute faite, impossible de ne pas faire matière à réflexion lorsque l'on visite la Fonderie Darling, nichée au cœur du Faubourg des Récollets, dans le « Quartier Éphémère ». Par sa mission, cet endroit étonnant oblige à sortir de soi et des sentiers battus, pour entrer de tout son long dans l'Autre, dans ses différences et complexités.

La Fonderie Darling est presque une entité en soi et rassemble des artistes de

partout : c'est un espace de création vivant, qui respire, qui porte aussi à la réflexion et à la recherche. En route vers la découverte, pénétrer l'intérieur de ce bâtiment est une expérience en soi. C'est la lumière qui touche tout d'abord, ensuite le silence, puis la diversité des formes visuelles de l'art contemporain. En effet, la Fonderie Darling « parle » au travers de chacune de ses oeuvres, comme si l'artiste était en train de lui souffler ses mots dans une tentative d'atteindre la réalité d'une époque urbaine. En ce sens, la Fonderie Darling visite et revisite nos lieux de mémoire, et s'intéresse tout particulièrement aux projets exploratoires, lesquels sont parfois à haute teneur technologique ou à facteur de risque important.

La sensation et la réflexion suscitées par le lieu ou par les objets, indépendamment de leur provenance culturelle, nous amènent à créer des parallèles avec d'autres sociétés, d'autres artistes et d'autres réalités urbaines. En effet, choisir l'art contemporain, c'est s'ouvrir à un autre regard, à une autre temporalité. De toute évidence, les artistes cherchent à rassembler le public autour de préoccupations communes, tels le patrimoine, la mémoire, l'architecture. Certains n'hésitent pas à faire « jaser leurs mondes », dans lesquels, pour notre plus grand bonheur, des existences croisées coexistent.

L'humain est fondamentalement individualiste. Il le demeure parfois toute sa vie. Certains le sont tellement qu'ils

en deviennent renfrognés, quasi muets. Les artistes de la Fonderie Darling partent à la recherche de signes pouvant traduire fidèlement cet état de fait, mais dans une vision unique, avant-gardiste. Ainsi, sur 3500 mètres carrés, et dans un souci de précision photographique, on réalise que l'individualisme possède également ses contradictions.

Ainsi, je ne peux m'empêcher, suite à la visite de la Fonderie Darling, de porter moi aussi, le même regard « photographique » sur ma ville, mes lieux de mémoire et ma société. En effet, les artistes, pour la plupart en résidence, font corps avec la ville, emboîtent le pas des passants, s'arrêtent devant les parcs, les grands magasins, dans les stations de métro, les pharmacies, les salons de thé. Parfois, je suis choquée, voire outrée, mais ce n'est pas l'artiste qui parle, ce sont ses oeuvres, lesquelles évoluent dans des lieux, des hasards et des rendez-vous. D'ailleurs, ce sont souvent des oeuvres simples, lesquelles ne se doutent pas, un seul instant, qu'elles possèdent une partie de l'histoire de la ville entre leurs formes.

Aussi, démontrer l'apport économique indéniable de la culture est dans ce cas-ci un stimulant qui vaut le détour. Je recommande tout particulièrement la visite de ce lieu à Stephen Harper. En effet, sa programmation internationale, ses résidences d'artistes étrangers à Montréal et canadiens en France, permettent au « Quartier

Éphémère » de susciter des échanges enrichissants entre les artistes en arts visuels et leurs publics, dans un bouillonnant partage d'idées et de dialogue. J'aime à imaginer les artistes se promenant en long et en large dans la ville, scrutant la montréalité au travers des lieux et des gens qui croisent leur route et qu'ils ne reverront probablement jamais. D'autres fois, ils peuvent être touchés personnellement, en retrouvant des gestes universels, comme le baiser des amoureux, ou même, qui sait, un visage familier, dans une femme attendant au supermarché, par exemple. C'est donc au dehors que les artistes de la Fonderie Darling déposent leurs existences passées, lucidement, sachant bien qu'eux-mêmes se trouvent au cœur de la foule, dans les rues de la ville, porteurs de la vie des autres.

Bref, j'invite tout le monde à visiter cet espace de création exceptionnel, ce lieu d'innovation, avec ses deux salles de diffusion, sa galerie, son café au rez-de-chaussée (lequel accueille 500 clients par semaine), ses résidences, ses ateliers de production, le tout formant un dynamique assemblage d'art visuel, dont le rayonnement au Québec, au Canada et partout dans le monde témoigne de son formidable apport de vie. ♠

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