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Katleen Paul Roc
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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

To make donations and/or submit community-related articles:

NCC/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre
Succursale Brossard
PO Box 142
Brossard, QC
J4W 3L9

Receipts will be sent for donations in excess of \$25.

450-672-7081
514-935-3437
450-672-7081 (fax)
sagyles@sympatico.ca

Editor & Proofreaders:
S. Nelson, S. Gyles
Copyeditor, Layout and Design: S. Gyles



NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE

NCC/CHARLES H. ESTE CULTURAL CENTRE

NCC/CENTRE CULTUREL CHARLES H. ESTE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring has arrived and we continue to work hard to ensure that our building will be reopened. We started the year off in fine fashion with our Pasta Dinner Theatre evening which was a great success, both financially and community involvement wise. We are presently sending out tax receipts for donations of \$25 or more regarding our bricks.

There have been some new developments, as **Mr. Mudi Wa (Lieven) Kabeya**, **Mr. Jackson Joseph** and **Mr. Devon Wyre** will now be attending meetings to assist the Board with specific fundraising strategies for the organization. These three people will officially be voted in by the membership, at our AGM in September, as our Bylaws dictate. This was the idea of Mr. Mark Bruneau, who is the Federal candidate running in the Jeanne le Ber riding of Montreal. Mr. Bruneau has agreed to assist and guide us to find people to help us with our work.

As you read the newsletter, you will notice that we also have planned some projects and some that are already in the works. It will be a very busy summer for us as we plan work, focus and progress. – *Shirley Gyles*

LE MOT DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

Le printemps est arrivé et nous continuons à travailler dur afin que notre bâtiment soit rouvert. Nous avons commencé l'année modestement avec notre soirée de théâtre et des pâtes qui fut néanmoins au succès sur le plan financier et aussi au niveau de la participation de la communauté. Nous envoyons actuellement des recettes fiscales pour des dons de 25 \$ ou plus pour nos briques.

Il y a eu quelques nouveautés, car **M. Mudi Wa (Lieven) Kabeya**, **M. Jackson Joseph** et **M. Devon Wyre** vont nous aider à amasser des fonds pour notre organisation. Ces personnes seront officiellement élues à l'interne par les membres, à notre assemblée générale au mois de septembre, comme nos règlements le dictent. C'était l'idée de M. Mark Bruneau, qui est le candidat fédéral actuel dans la circonscription électorale de Jeanne le Ber à Montréal. M. Bruneau a accepté de nous aider et guider pour trouver des personnes qui nous aideront à atteindre nos objectifs.

Dans notre bulletin, vous remarquerez que nous avons prévu d'autres projets dont une partie est déjà bien entamée. Ce sera donc un été très occupé pour nous alors que nous nous préoccupons de notre travail, de nos foyers et du progrès. – *Shirley Gyles*

BLACK HISTORY MONTH OPENING

The opening of Black History Month at Montreal City Hall, on February 1, 2011 was a little different this year, from those in the past. This year, **Minister Kathleen Weil**, the Minister of Culture, and **Mr. Michael Farkas**, President of the Black History Month Round Table unveiled two new Canada Post stamps featuring Black Canadians, writer and human rights activist, **Dr. Carrie Best** and major league baseball right-hand pitcher, **Mr. Ferguson (Fergie) Jenkins**. They join **Rosemary Brown**, **Abraham Doras Shadd** and **William Hall** as part of a small but growing group of Black Canadians, beacons in the community, who are being posthumously recognized and honoured for their contributions and



accomplishments to Canadian and Black History. We encourage you to please remember to continue to buy these stamps so that they may be kept in circulation. For more information on these two individuals visit:

http://www.canadapost.ca/cpo/mc/aboutus/news/pr/2011/2011_feb_black_history_month.jsf

This year as usual another 12 new laureates were celebrated for their accomplishments and achievements. For more information on the Black History Month Round Table and laureates, please visit: <http://www.moishistoiredesnoirs.com/index.php>
The members of the Board congratulate all laureates.

- S. Nelson

Meet Ms. Barbara Glasgow, our Treasurer. Barbara has been on the Board since October 2010.



PASTA DINNER THEATRE

It was a night to remember. Our first Pasta Dinner Theatre was a huge success as 120 guests enjoyed a wonderful pasta dinner and flavourful wine. Take a look for yourself... The ambiance was electrifying as Mrs. Melissa Waddy-Thibodeaux gave a riveting portrayal of Lavinia Bell, a Black woman who escaped from the bondages of slavery to arrive in Montreal in 1867. This event was done in conjunction with the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association, the University of Plattsburgh and the Clinton County College.

Mr. Don and Mrs. Vivian Papson of the NCUGRHA attended the evening and Mr. Papson gave a brief history of the Association and described what Ms. Bell's life was like during slavery.

We would like to thank our sponsors who helped to make the evening such a success: **Barefoot Wines, Hot Spot Restaurant, Loblaws, Omni Hotel, Lisa Anella Advance Esthetics, Via Rail, Heavenly D-Lite and BMO.** – S. Gyles



Photos courtesy of Kevin Calixte A. Passioné



Photo courtesy of Dr. Dolores Sandoval



Do you know who's who in the NCC Board of Directors picture (left)? Who are the two men standing at either end of the middle row and who are the two women?



Mrs. Nancy Ingram Winner auction Via Rail Tickets Photo courtesy C. Gyles

NCC COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

In November, the NCC Board voted to become a member of the **North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association** in Plattsburgh, New York.

The NCUGRHA was launched in 2004, by a group of dedicated and inspired volunteers. The inaugural event took place at the North Country Cultural Center for the Arts in Plattsburgh. At the Centre, the lives of abolitionists and freedom seekers are celebrated with a special focus on the rediscovery of the Champlain Line of the Underground Railroad. Emphasis is placed on the Underground Railroad history of seven northeastern New York counties which include Washington, Warren, Saratoga, Essex, Clinton, Franklin, St. Lawrence and contiguous areas in Vermont and Canada. We are proud to state that the work that was done in Upstate New York is advancing the national and international importance of this region. <http://northcountryundergroundrailroad.com/NCUGRHA-Home.htm> - S. Nelson

MR. MARK BRUNEAU'S PLEDGE OF HELP AND SUPPORT THE NCC



Mr. Mark Bruneau who is the Federal Candidate for the riding of Jeanne le Ber has promised to help within the community and support the NCC in their move forward.

Originally from Ottawa Mr. Bruneau is and founder of **Adventis**, an international strategy and management consulting firm with offices in North America and Europe. They were the first provider of strategic counsel to CEOs at Bell Canada, AT&T, Siemens, Apple, Verizon, IBM, British Telecom and other Fortune 500 companies. Mark is a member of the Board of Directors of the Centaur Theatre and NeuroScience Canada. He recently contributed to the creation of the Mark Bruneau Professorship of Entrepreneurship Fund for the University of Ottawa's School of Management as well as the Mark Bruneau Fellowships in Canadian Studies Fund for McGill University. – S. Gyles

I was working in an office on St. Paul Street in old Montreal when one night a friend and I decided to go to Rockhead's Paradise. The music was pumping and everyone was having a great time. After the show I went back to the bar and started talking to Kenny, Rufus Rockhead's son, when he asked me if I would like to work there? This was in 1969 and I said, "I sure would;" he did not have to ask me a second time, and it took off right from there.

Let me give you a little background about Mr. Rufus Rockhead; he was born in Jamaica but I cannot say when he came to Canada. I know he married here and had three children two daughters and a son. Mr. Rockhead opened his tavern on Mountain and St. Antoine streets back in the day when Blacks were not supposed to be able to hold liquor licenses. To my understanding, he had no patience for the prejudice ways of bureaucrats, and because he knew a few people, and had some friends Mr. Rockhead was able to acquire the necessary licenses.

Rufus was not afraid of anyone. I am told that when Maurice Duplessis took away his liquor license, Rockhead's remained closed for nine years until the Liberals came back into power and he reclaimed his license in 1961. A few years later he parlayed the tavern into Rockhead's Paradise. A lot had happened between that time and the time

I Remember Rockhead's Paradise

started working there in 1969. I remember the entertainment was really nice and by then Rockhead's was well known for its floor shows, bands, strippers, dancers, singers and MCs. All the entertainment came from the United States, billed mostly as being "direct from Harlem." During the summer, bus loads of Americans would come to Rockhead's and the streets would be lined up with people waiting to get into the club.



There were three floors not counting the tavern, the cocktail bar with a bar length of 75 feet and where the music was strictly Jazz. The second floor was where the stage shows were held, and the third floor was a bar where all the late comers would gather. Also there was a kitchen that was run by Mr. Stomp who had the best fried chicken in town. The Expo ball team hung out sometimes, football players like Johnny Rogers and many, many other famous people. I also remember the times when a musician or an entertainer was not good

good enough, they would be gone and told, "you are not good enough for Rockhead's Mr. Rockhead was strictly business and there was no messing around when it came to working and doing your job. If one messed up he would give you a week in the street (out of work for a week). He never called an employee by his or her name, he had a nickname for everyone including me. Mr. Rockhead was very straight and pulled no punches because the club was his life. I can remember only one where he took a vacation and came back after one day.

A couple of years went by when Kenny Rockhead decided to get with the times and bring in a band. It was nice for us young ladies, but at the same time hard at first to get use to this change. Mr. Rockhead would walk around with cotton in his ears.

Rufus was the man he was loved and respected by many, many people. Mr. Rockhead and I had a very special working relationship for fourteen years. When he took sick everything changed, the club was sold and when Mr. Rockhead passed, he took the club with him but we know that they are partying hard up there. Many great musicians and entertainers that worked at Rockhead's are with him.

-D. Ryce

(Doreen Ryce is a member of our Board and worked for Mr. Rockhead from 1969 until Rockhead's closure.)

Photos Courtesy Doreen Ryce



JACKIE ROBINSON MUSEUM



MONTREAL'S BLACK ORAL HISTORY SEMINAR SUMMER 2011

The NCC/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre will be hosting an oral history seminar during the summer. The event will feature Black Canadian senior citizens and students. The goal of the event is to bridge the generation gap. We will be featuring Black Canada's rich oral history and fond memories of "back in the day." The event will feature a documentary and a 'speed-history dating' circuit, keeping everyone wanting more by the end of the evening. Refreshments will be served. For more information or to participate in this never-seen-before event please contact Michal Harewood, email: michal_harewood@hotmail.com, Tel. 514-266-5463 or Andrew Biteen Tel. 514-686-1588 email: andrewbiteen@gmail.com - M. Harewood, A. Biteen

At the end of Black History Month, Mr. Lee McClenny, the U.S. Consul-General unveiled a commemorative plaque at 8232 de Gaspé, the house where Jackie Robinson and his wife, Rachel lived in 1946, during the time, Robinson played baseball with the Montreal Royals. It was "an emotional experience" for the couple's daughter, Mrs. Sharon Robinson, Vice-Chairman of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, who made her first visit to the home. Also present were Mr. David Jacobson, the U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Mrs. Line Beauchamp, Minister of Education, Leisure and Sport, Montreal Mayor Mr. Gérald Tremblay and of course invited members from various Black community organizations. Mrs. Robinson, who is now 88 years old, was unable to attend. - S. Gyles



The Coloured Women's Club
 Founded 1902 • Member of the Montreal Council of Women
 PRESENTS ITS ANNUAL...

Spring Hat Rose Tea



CÔTE DES NEIGES COMMUNITY CENTER

6767 Cote des Neiges Road, Montreal, Quebec

on Sunday, May 15th, 2011 at 3:00 pm until 6:00 pm

HAT COMPETITION

Prizes to be awarded for: most original, best designed, most colourful, cultural expression, Sunday's best and people's choice. Gentlemen are most welcome.



SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMER:

Mrs. Vivian Papsen
 from the North Country
 Underground Railroad
 Historical Association

VICTORIAN DUO:

Mrs. Ruth Gover and
 Mr. Johnny Stewart
 accompanied by
 Mr. Bryan Highbloom

TICKETS: \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door.

DOOR PRIZES

INFORMATION AND TICKETS:

450-672-7081 • 514-488-3284 • 514-696-7944 • sagyles@sympatico.ca

PHOTOS WANTED!

Please send/loan us your photos. We will use them for the NCC. Please indicate the following: name of individual (s) in the picture, the event, year and approximate date picture was taken. Electronic copies can be emailed to: nelsonsharon85@yahoo.ca

BRICKS AND WINDOWS

Large window \$ 5,000 each
Small window \$ 2,500 each
Bricks \$ 25 each

Thank you in advance for your support. See form online at

<http://www.nccmontreal.org>

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Answer: Walter F. Taylor (Sandoval), Mr. Dudley Sykes, Mrs. Bella Johnson (dark dress), Mrs. Irene Morris (plaid dress)

NCC CALENDAR of EVENTS

Montreal Black Oral History Seminars/ Intergenerational Event
 Little Burgundy Sports Centre, Donation
 June 11, 2011

Wine, Dine and Learn to Cook - Southern/ Caribbean Style
 Loblaws, 6600 St. Jacques St. W., Montreal,
 Tickets: \$75.00 July 7, 2011

Softball / Baseball Games
 Location to be confirmed. \$10 for season:
 Tuesday evenings June 21 to August 30, 2011

Bus Tour - Underground Railroad
 Tour upstate New York and sites of the Underground Railroad. Visit to the NCUGRHA's new museum. (Cost: TBA) August 13, 2011

Annual General Meeting, (AGM)
 Little Burgundy Sports Centre
 Open to new and returning members
 September 2011

Pasta Dinner Theatre
 6767 Cote des Neiges, \$25 (\$30 at the door)
 February 2012

COLOURED WOMEN'S CLUB CALENDAR of EVENTS

Sunday, May 15, 2011 - 3:00 PM
 Spring Hat Rose Tea
 6767 Cote des Neiges, Montreal
 Tickets \$25.00

August 27 to Sept. 12, 2011
 Coloured Women's Club Tour - CRUISE to Alaska Info:
 S. Gyles: Tel. 450-672-7081, Email: sagyles@sympatico.ca

NCC T-SHIRTS \$15 each
 Available sizes: M, L, XL, XXL. To order, or for more information: Doreen at 514-561-7600 or 514-766-0147.
Shipping and handling charges extra.

NCC MEMBERSHIP
 Youth (>17) \$10 / year, Senior's \$10 / year, Adult \$15 / year. Membership forms:
www.nccmontreal.org

JOSEPH EMILE LEACOCK

A Montrealer Through and Through

Mr. Joseph Emile Leacock was born in 1929, in the part of Montreal then known as Carré Gravel. The second youngest child of seven children, Emile's parents immigrated to Montreal, his father, James in 1901 from Barbados via England and his mother, Alice from Guadeloupe in 1908. His parents married in 1910 at Notre Dame Church in Old Montreal and proceeded to have their children in order of birth: Cecile, Clarice, Carmen, Robert (Bobbie), Jacqueline, Emile, and Raymond.

From a young age, Emile's father made him and his siblings feel like they were the best children in the world. As he grew, his attitude also grew, to encompass Montreal and his place in it. Because his mother's first language was French and his father's English, Emile grew up speaking both with ease with even a little Creole. Maintaining that the City of Montreal belongs to him and that he knows it like the back of his hand, he often contends that he can run the city. His dear sisters would not necessarily agree with him although they called him the "Professor" due to his love of reading and his gift of the gab.

A self-taught man and amateur boxer, Emile left school at the age of twelve and started working odd jobs. He had been delivering papers from the age of eight. He started working for the T. Eaton Company (department store) at the age of eighteen as an apprentice to the plasterer where he constructed models for the window dresser. He married the love of his life, Anna (Tootsie) Bonar, who was from Cape Breton, when he was in his early twenties. They built a solid life together and had three children Brock, Danielle and Wendy of their own and fostered fourteen others over the years. He is the grandfather of seven.



University Settlement Boxing Group Emile (6th from left), Pompey Alleyne (6th from right), Jimmy Mack (4th from right) Billy Zed (Coach and Trainer (sitting middle row, third from left)

Growing up during the Depression was no easy task for the family of seven and even though there was a lack of jobs, father James managed to take care of his family. When older brother Bobby joined the army and went off to war, the family was



Emile, Age 14, Drummer Fifth Field Ambulance Corps



Emile Leacock, Age 18



Photos courtesy Emile Leacock

Emile's sister Carmen's wedding

Sitting: Mr. and Mrs. Alleyne, Pompey Alleyne, Carmen, Alice Leacock - mother, Bobby Leacock - brother, Jacqueline Leacock Lord - sister standing behind Carmen and Raymond Leacock - brother behind her and Emile

naturally very concerned. When Emile tried to join the 17th Duke of Hussars so that he could be close to his brother, he was told, "Go Back home kid, this is a white man's war." He did however, become a drummer for the Fifth Field Ambulance (Medical) Corps. Also during the war, his sisters worked for the munitions plant in St. Paul l'Ermit. Emile always the little man, helped to take care of the family doing odd jobs and running errands for his mother.

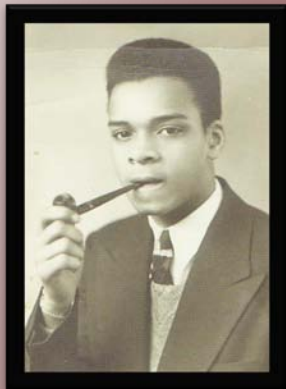
Always the sportsman, Emile also engaged in many team and individual sports such as football, hockey, swimming and baseball. By the age of 18, he was boxing with the University Settlement boxing group. Also during that time he played baseball for the Bellevue Dufferin Millionaires. Golf was a game that he also enjoyed and could play well although it was not among his favourites.

From the age of 18, Emile brought his sense belonging to the city and knowledge of self in the boxing ring, a place he knew that he was as good as any other boxer of the day. As a fighter he described himself as "a real killer in the ring".

HONOURING OUR SENIORS



Mr. James Leacock, Emile's father



Emile Leacock at age 18

Emile began working for the Pullman Company at the age of 24; the company's headquarters was located in the US which afforded him many opportunities to travel there. Although his job was very demanding he used his position to become a 'salesman' for the company. He was always willing to help and knew how to speak to clients and make them feel comfortable. After 8 years of working with the Pullman Company he quit as the job often kept him away from his family often, for long periods of time. After that, he began working at Steinberg's where he stayed for 25 years. While working there he refused management positions because he preferred to be a Union Representative standing up for the rights of the employees.



Anna (Tootsie) and Emile Leacock, 1967



Otis Nixon, Emile, Hal McRea



Emile and Mohammed Ali

Because of his position in the community and his penchant for boxing, Emile had numerous opportunities to meet many of the legendary Black sports stars of the day who played in Montreal. He actually spent a day back in 1967 escorting Ali around the town.

Emile finally retired from Steinberg's at the age of 57. It was then that he really began to enjoy his life and his earnings. If you are

fortunate enough to visit his home, the many memorabilia decorating the walls of his apartment are a testament to his life. Many of them are gifts or items he bought himself and decided that they should be displayed for all visitors to see. At the age of 72, Emile attended a class at Concordia University and found it very stimulating as he was around young people and their ideas. It brought back to mind the days that he spent talking to the young students in the various schools in Montreal. He also recognizes that one of the most important things to him is to live this long and to tell the story that he knows.



Today, Emile is a retired community elder who has given much to family and community. A founding member and former Vice-President and President of the Council For Black Aging (2004 – 2005), he is the recipient of numerous awards, Emile received the Good Samaritan Award from Council on Black Aging. He was also at one time the Vice-President of the NCC (2004 -2010), he is now in an advisory position and continues to help and support in the community wherever and whenever he can. Sadly, Mrs. Leacock passed away in December 2009.- *S. Nelson, S. Gyles*

If you know a senior who you feel should be honoured, please send us their name, place and date of birth along with about 100 words in each category of their historical information, their career achievements, community achievements and many photos. We would be delighted to shine a spotlight on them.