



December 24, 2019
Volume IV Issue II



News and Muse

Message from the President



It's Christmas time!
There's something about this season that brings back memories more than any other. So let's sit back and relax by the fire with a glass of eggnog and reminisce about busier times when the holiday season meant juggling so many tasks.

Remember...

- the fragrance of the freshly-cut tree that we dragged home from the empty lot down the street.
- toting those huge shopping bags through Eaton's, the long lineup for the real Santa Claus who lived there, and children riding the little train that ran through the fourth floor.
- secretly wrapping the mountains of gifts, each one topped with one of those little stick-on bows.
- standing on a snowbank to watch the Santa Claus Parade, and never missing an outing to see Ogilvy's magical Christmas window.
- bundling up and trudging through the snow to midnight mass.
- Christmas Day spent in the kitchen roasting the turkey while listening to Bing Crosby sing *White Christmas* on CJAD.

Time has passed. So what does Christmas look like for us today?

Today Christmas might mean ...

- struggling to remember your password while ordering gifts on Amazon Prime.

Editor: Mario Tirelli
mtirelli@hotmail.ca

- watching your nephew deep-fry the turkey, to be served up with dressing from the IGA Holiday Catering Services.
- going to midnight Mass... at 9:00 p.m.!
- listening to Alexa's choice of Mariah Carey singing *All I Want for Christmas is You*.

Even though some traditions may have changed over the years as many of our responsibilities have been passed on to the younger generation, it's still the same Christmas: we are just viewing it from a different angle.

So today let the magic of the season inspire us to live the true meaning of Christmas, by sharing with family and friends
whatever is beautiful,
whatever is meaningful,
whatever brings us happiness.

May we all strive to give back a little of what is best that life offers so that peace and joy are ours. This is my wish for you this holiday season. And to those of you who are ill or may be experiencing feelings of solitude, please know that your friends and colleagues from ACRA are with you in spirit.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each and every one of you!

Norma

Christmas is not a date. It is a state of mind. Mary Ellen Chase

Mario's Musings

During this season of joy, cheer, and celebration, it's important to take a moment to reflect upon the many people who are not able to enjoy the blessings of Christmas. Let's pray for all those who are going through difficult times and wish them a better future.

Some of the best gifts one can give or receive are not bought or arrive in fancy wrappings; a cheerful hug, a warm smile, a gentle ear, a kind heart, and some precious time together, are all priceless and most appreciated.

As the new year approaches, let's ask how we can make at least one life better. How can we be more present in the moment and be a source of comfort to at least one more human being?

Briefs from the Board

- ◆ Member Outreach Program: We are looking at reaching out to our members who we have not heard from. We will look through our directory and try to determine who these members are and send out personal cards to express our concern.
- ◆ Website: The Board will look at the site and recommend changes, if necessary.
- ◆ Newsletter: A discussion was had regarding different topics to be included in our Newsletter. We are always looking for suggestions from our members.
- ◆ Registration Update: 181 members renewed membership;
 - 3 members that we haven't heard from;
 - 3 members that did not renew.
- ◆ Date of the next Board meeting: February 6, 2020 in Candiac.

DATES TO REMEMBER



St. Valentine Luncheon
Thursday, February 13, 2020

St. Patrick Day Luncheon
Thursday, March 19, 2020



ACRA Memorial Mass

On Sunday, November 10, 2019, 43 members congregated at St. Jean Brebeuf Church in LaSalle for the ACRA Memorial Mass. The celebrant, Fr. Gerry Martineau, welcomed everyone in four languages and made specific mention of the presence of ACRA members. Special intentions at this year's mass were for the ACRA members who have passed away since the last Memorial Mass: Mary McDonald (1927-2018), Alain Picard (1928-2018), and Lali Jones (1940-2019). Our treasurer, Tony Di Lallo, and our president, Norma Passaretti, delivered the first and second readings.

Father Gerry's sermon reflected the Gospel of the day, emphasizing the meaning and importance of our resurrection. He asked very pointed questions of the children attending the mass, with the adults feeling much relief that the questions weren't being addressed to them!

After the mass, a wonderful brunch of eggs, ham and bacon, hash browns, pancakes, fruit, and croissants was provided by the Knights of Columbus. For a nominal fee of \$10, there was more than enough food to satisfy everyone's appetite and provide healthy seconds for anyone who wanted.

A special thank you to Al Fitzgerald who assisted the Board of Directors in preparing for the mass and the brunch by being the contact person with Father Gerry and Joey Cuscuna.





ACRA Christmas Luncheon

On a bright December 12th, 60 ACRA members and friends gathered at Casa Grecque in Brossard for our annual Christmas luncheon. The long tradition of ACRA members helping St. Gabriel's Food Bank continues as members were asked to donate generously during this special time of giving.

Raz Crivello and Bill Holowka made sure each table had a lovely poinsettia as a centerpiece, to be taken home by a lucky person in attendance. John Hachey graciously provided some musical entertainment and along with Raz led everyone in some varied renditions of favourite Christmas carols.

Our President, Norma Passaretti, warmly welcomed everyone and asked Waguih Tabet to say grace before our meal. Waguih gave thanks for our blessings and asked us to pray for those less fortunate.

After our meal and before dessert, Santa Claus made a surprise visit. He delivered some Christmas cheer, a few ho, ho, ho, ho's, and entertained everyone with some humorous tales about our members' Christmas wishes, all in good fun!

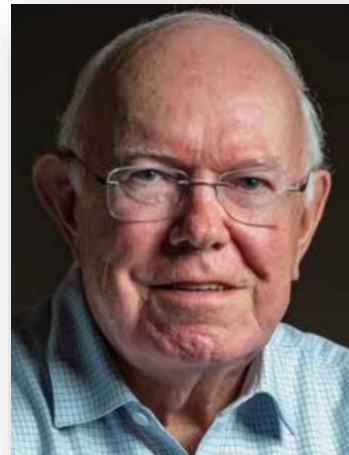
It was a very successful luncheon benefiting St. Gabriel's Food Bank!



\$4610
The amount raised for St. Gabriel's Food Bank via "mail-ins" and at our Christmas Luncheon.



Martin Murphy Awarded Community Service Award



One of this year's four Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Awards was presented to a longtime ACRA Member, Martin Murphy. Our President, Norma Passaretti, proudly congratulated him on behalf of our members and Martin kindly shared some memories of his involvement in education and the service of others. "It is true that I loved the teaching profession. In 1962, when I started at Marymount, I joined the Federation of English-speaking Catholic Teachers and in November of that year, was elected Its Treasurer. There were two important moments that I recall with great pride: the first, as President of the Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers at the Teachers' Convention in November 1966, I spoke before 3,000 English Catholic Teachers in the new Palais des Congress at Place des Arts in the presence of Jean-Jacques Bertrand (later Premier); the second, in February 1967 when Raymond Laliberte, President of the CEQ, Anne MacLeish, President of PAPT, and I met Premier Daniel Johnson in Quebec City during the province-wide teachers' strike. We left his office with a return-to-work protocol agreement giving back 70% of income they lost during the five-week strike, plus a new salary scale. I remember the "Our Quest for Happiness" text in religion at Cardinal Newman when the late Msgr. Russell Breen taught us the chapter on social justice which evidently served us well! Waxing a little nostalgic!"

"Martin Murphy is known as the godfather of the Quebec Community Groups Network – and with reason. As the QCGN's first president, Murphy helped establish its current by-laws and structure. He has defended Quebec's English-speaking minority fiercely since the organization's inception in 1995." Source, QCGN awards booklet.

"As you may know, I was around the table in Lennoxville in 1994, now twenty-five years ago, when the first Agreement was signed between the English-Speaking

Minority Communities in Quebec as represented by QCGN, and the Federal Government. I have been quite active in that arena for most of the time ever since, including as President (2002-2005), while I was also Executive Director of the English Speaking Catholic Council where I worked for seventeen years after retirement from Baldwin Cartier School Board.....keeps the blood circulating! There are so many others, including yourself, who deserve special recognition for giving so generously in many forums over the years to improve the quality of life for all of us. It remains for me to tell you how honoured I am to receive your message as President of ACRA."

"A gentleman with unswerving commitment to service, Martin Murphy has long been a spirited and adroit advocate for social justice. Driven always by his strong sense of duty, he has advanced core community causes including better conditions for our teachers; greater access in English to our health and social services; and the successful conclusion of stormy negotiations with the federal government to ensure equitable funding. He has also quietly served as something of a godfather for the QCGN throughout its 24-year history. Murphy has proven particularly adept at keeping the development and vitality of our many smaller and more fragile English-speaking communities – dotted across Quebec's many regions – at the forefront of our collective focus." Source, QCGN press release.

ACRA is honoured to have Martin as a member and the entire English-Speaking community is extremely grateful for all his efforts and years of service!

St. Gabe's Food Bank Christmas Baskets

On Sunday, December 22nd, thirteen ACRA members along with family and friends helped many other community volunteers with the annual food basket delivery. Two hundred and fifty families received a generous Christmas food basket on December 22nd.

Sister Dianna and her helpers had arranged for six trucks to be available for deliveries. The entire operation was extremely efficient and completed in two and one half hours, from 1:30 to 4:00 pm.

We are grateful for Jerry Dunn who continues to help coordinate the involvement of ACRA members.

We would also like to acknowledge the presence of Gayle Jaroslowski and her husband, Patrick Guidote, Erik Sergent, Al Fitzgerald's grandson, Richard Santello and Coby Ingram, Lions' Club members.

Thank you to everyone who helped with this annual event that is so special to the St. Gabriel's Food Bank.



*The Board of Directors
extends its warmest wishes to
you and your loved ones for a
most holy and happy
Christmas. May the New Year
bring you the best of health,
peace, and many reasons for
celebrating and rejoicing.*

*Norma Passaretti Joe
Sony Di Falco Patricia Hoff
A*

*William Holarka Roy Conville
Mauritelli Marvin D. Jones*