

Book swap promotes the rewards of literacy

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“I love this book swap. I look forward to it every year. It's on my social calendar,” says Kristine Sanderson when approached by this QCT writer. We chatted at the fourth annual book swap put on by the Quebec City Reading Council (QCRC) last Wednesday evening at the Eastern Quebec Learning Centre.

Sanderson, who hasn't missed a swap in the last three years, remarked, “I don't watch television anymore; I only read.” She can “pick [a book] up anytime,” whereas with television she feels limited to a program schedule. She went on to say that, “Living in Quebec City, [where French dominates] I miss the [English] culture.” She reads the QCT and *The Montreal Gazette* once a week, but relies mostly on books for her English fix. The book swap, organized in conjunction with Adult Learners' Week from April 6 to 14, was slightly under-attended this year, with only about 70

visitors. Perhaps, commented Sanderson, because “it was only announced one week before the event in the QCT and if you weren't careful, you could have missed it.”

At the book swap no money is exchanged for any book; this supports the idea of literacy and the sharing of knowledge for all. No textbooks or periodicals are accepted and the only stipulation is that the books must be in good condition.

Cathy Nolan, the Executive Director at the QCRC, explains how the book swap supports their mission. “By offering free services, we strive to remove possible obstacles to learning and personal development. For example, books are expensive. Books in English are not as widely available here as French books.” She goes on to say that “being able to read opens doors” and adds, “if you can read you can cook, travel, get lost in a great book, read to your children, read for pleasure, improve at school or in your personal life, study anything, and get the best out of life.” And that's just

for starters.

In the EQLC cafeteria, book swap attendee Dael Grant looks over the novel *1984* by George Orwell. When I tell her I also have the novel on my bookshelf at home, we get into a passionate discussion about another Orwell book, *Animal Farm*. She is an “animal advocate” and loves the last sentence in the book! Dael knows the importance of education and literacy. An “avid bookworm,” she has recently completed a French Secondary V class at the EQLC as a prerequisite to a Library and Information course in Montreal. She has also volunteered with the QCRC as a essential skills tutor and says her self-confidence has improved as a result.

As people arrive with stacks and bags of books, others leave with just as many. It is a one-for-one trade, and the treasures keep arriving throughout the evening, including classics and best-sellers. Most of the books are in English, but a fair-sized French section appears, which pleases the Franciza-

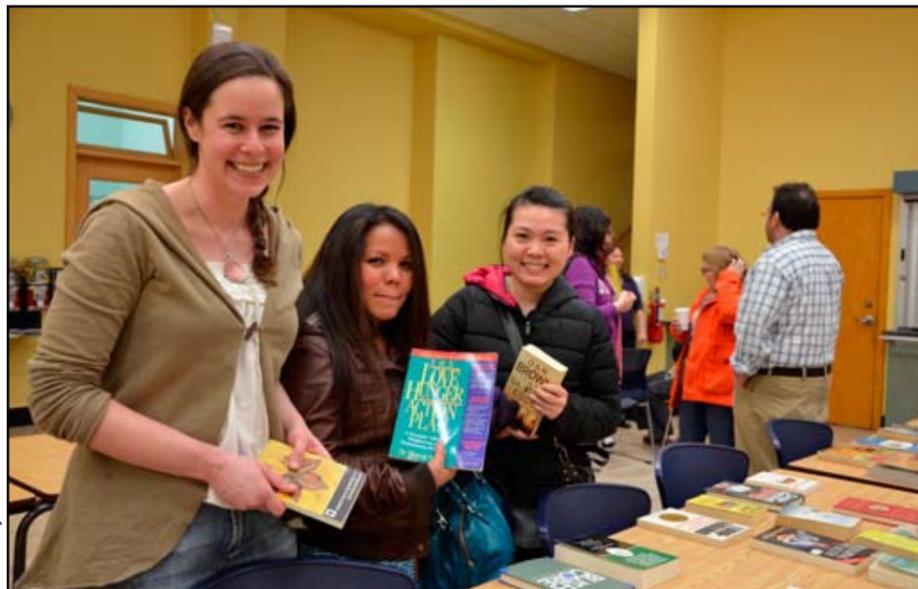


Photo by Danielle Burns

EQLC Francization students and newcomers Anne Dalziel from Nova Scotia, Rosie Estodillo from Philippines, and Wing Sze Szeto from Hong Kong are delighted with their selections at the book swap.

tion students who come at the end of the evening to take leftover books.

One newbie to the swap tells me she hopes eventually to read books in French and considers reading a French novel that she is familiar with in English. I may have been slightly over-ambitious with my choice of book: *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, since

it may take me one hundred years of solitude to finish it. I am hopeful that it will be worth it in the end. A quote from *A Dance With Dragons* by George R.R. Martin, who wrote the epic fantasy books that inspired the HBO series *Game of Thrones*, seems appropriate: “A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies The man who never reads lives only one.”

The people who attended the book swap can expect to enjoy many lives!

**Editor's note: In case you are wondering, here is the last line of Animal Farm. “The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.”*

The forgotten colony

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Well before Quebec City, Jamestown in Virginia and St. Augustine in Florida, the first known colony in North America was established at the mouth of the Cap-Rouge river. It was named France-Roy by its founder, Jean-François de La Roque de Roberval, a member of the court of King Francis I of France. Until recently, little was known about the event, and even less about Roberval. The Commission de la capitale nationale (CCN) has undertaken to remedy the paucity of information about this site which, located in Cap-Rouge, is within the city limits of Quebec. A book has just been published and an exhibit will soon open at the Musée de la Civilisation.

Thursday last, Françoise Mercure, the recently appointed president of the CCN, presided over the launching of the book *La rumeur dorée* (the golden rumour) at the Observatoire de la capitale, at the top of Complexe G. Written by Bernard Allaire, an historian from Quebec City now residing in Nice, France, the new publication presents a very different picture of Roberval from the one given in our school textbooks. The man was a Protestant, a fact that might explain why past Quebec historians have favoured Jacques Cartier in writing about the Cap-Rouge colony. Cartier actually founded

the establishment in 1541, but he was working for Roberval at the time. He had come ahead of the main group of colonists because Roberval had not yet completed his preparations. Roberval was not the dilettante described in the *Canadian Biography Dictionary* but an experienced and competent officer in the French army. The text contains many errors about the individual, starting with his mother's name. He has also been falsely described as an occasional pirate.

La rumeur dorée is the 54th book published for the CCN. The publisher is Les Éditions La Presse. At the book launch, the author spoke of the many hardships he had encountered in his research, citing in particular the dispersal of the archives, their difficult accessibility and the problems of reading the hand-written documents.

At the April 11 ceremony, Mercure and Michel Côté, general director of the Musée de la Civilisation, announced a new exhibit called *La colonie retrouvée* which will open at the end of April. Among the items on display to the public will be many artefacts from the archaeological digs at Cap-Rouge. Since 2005, when the location of the colony was discovered, extensive research has been underway on the heights of the cape under the auspices of the CCN. To this day more than 4,000 objects dating from the 16th century have been discovered.

Denis Angers, the CNN's communication and promotion director, acted as emcee at the book launch. He revealed that a third project is under consideration regarding the site, first called Charlesbourg-Royal by Cartier before being renamed France-Roy by Roberval. Discussions are taking place about moving a statue of Jacques Cartier to the Cap-Rouge site. The monument was inaugurated in 1926 and used to stand in front of the Gabrielle-Roy library, until recently when it was placed in storage in a city warehouse. More will be known about this in the coming weeks.



Photo by Shirley Nadeau

Françoise Mercure, President of the Commission de la capitale nationale, with author Bernard Allaire, Michel Côté, General Director of the Musée de la Civilisation, and Caroline Jamet, President of Édition La Presse, at the launch of Allaire's book *La rumeur dorée*.

Juanita Craig visits Cégep Garneau

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QCT writer Juanita Craig was a guest speaker in three English classes at Cégep Garneau on April 4 and 11. Craig talked about her Maori culture and her country, New Zealand. Craig invited the classes to visit the *E Tuu Ake* exhibit at the Musée de la civilisation to learn more about her country and traditions.



Photo by Marie White