VOLUME 35 NUMBER 3 AUTUMN 2019



# Le Mercien

The Voice of the Merciers of North America

# The Mercier Association will celebrate its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary

on August 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu



The 2019 Gathering of the Merciers was held at Lac-Mégantic, on August 24th & 25th, 2019

#### HONOUR ROLL - GOVERNORS OF THE MERCIER ASSOCIATION

Name	Member No.	Occupation	Residence	Admission
Ernest Mercier * Président fondateur AMAN	32	Agronomy	Québec, QC	1985
Pierre-Paul Mercier *	19	Administration	St-Lambert, QC	2000
Louis Mercier	52	Actuary	St-Bruno-de-Montarville, QC	2000
Pierre Mercier	73	Engineering	St-Bruno-de-Montarville, QC	2000
Suzanne Mercier	74	Commerce	Montréal, QC	2000
Christine Mercier	75	Teaching	Québec, QC	2000
Charles Mercier	76	Engineering	Québec, QC	2000
Alain Mercier *	77	Communication	Québec, QC	2000
Lucienne Mercier-Croteau *	988	Teaching	Bonnyville, AB	2001
Ralph Mercier	1151	Administration	Québec (Charlesbourg), QC	2012
				(*) deceased

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Vice-President:	Germain Nappert	1480	Boisbriand	(450) 437-1220	nappert@videotron.ca
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#### **MEMBERSHIP FEES 2019-2020**

Annual fees are due before May 31st of each year

Annually: \$35/year \$65/2 years
Annually + spouse(s): \$40/year \$75/2 years
Governor 1 000 \$

Those amounts are in U.S. currency for U.S. residents and in euros for European residents.

This newsletter is named after the Kingdom of Mercia which existed from the 7th to the 10th centuries. It was one of the seven original Kingdoms constituting England. The inhabitants of that territory must have been called Mercien. We are proud to perpetuate that name today.

Legal deposit - 2019 Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec - BAnQ's Library and Archives Canada - LAC

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Opinions expressed in the published articles belong exclusively to their authors. The fact that they are published in this newsletter does not mean that the Association agrees with or supports them.

Email : famillesmercier1985@gmail.com - Website : www.famillesmercier.org L'Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord is a member of the Fédération Histoire Québec

# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all!

Manahar

The year 2019 will soon end and I must thank all of you for attending in large numbers our annual gathering in Lac-Mégantic on August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. In this issue of Le Mercien, you will find a summary report of our annual gathering. For the first time, we included in the registration fee the cost of the Saturday evening meal, as well as the Sunday lunch, the guided tour and the farewell glass of wine. All those in attendance greatly appreciated this friendly get-together where old acquaintances and new ones could chat and trade news. We were lucky enough to have "the weather on our side" and that gave us a chance to really appreciate that beautiful area.

Our annual general meeting started with our theme song "To you Mercier of America" to which a sixth verse has been added to honour Jean Mercier, who settled in Louisiana. The President became a "Gentle Organizer" by playing facilitator for the occasion. Our spouses Johanne (Mario, no. 1544) and Carole (Jacques, no. 341) welcomed everyone with a smile while handing out the usual documents. Participants could admire our new retractable banner (roll-up) representing the 6 families from whom most of the Merciers of North America are descended.



At the end of the meeting, the Board mentioned the important contribution, since the early days of the Association, of descendants from one of the original families, the Merciers also known as Lajoie. An honorary certificate was given to Céline and Gilmond no. 28, for their ongoing accomplishments in preserving the Mercier heritage. It was also mentioned that Céline and Gilmond were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, while our American friends Doris and Maurice were celebrating their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year.

After a delicious lunch, everyone boarded a bus for a fascinating guided tour of the town of Lac-Mégantic. The photographs appearing in this issue of Le Mercien show how pleasant the gathering was. In closing, I am asking you to set aside the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of August next year for another annual gathering. We are still working on it, but it will probably be held in the beautiful region of Upper-Richelieu, in Saint-Jean.

Wishing you all the best for the end of 2019 and Happy Holidays! Jacques no. 341

## RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP FEES - NEW MEMBERS AND DONATIONS [as of October 31, 2019]

_	Member N°	Name	City - Province/State	Fees	Dona- tions	Date May
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!	473 495 616 704 1432 1565 1580 1601 1621 1624 1633 1648	Véronique Mercier Giguère n°1649 Pauline & Léo Mercier Huguette Bellisle & Jean-F. Hétu n°1650 Josette Mercier Josette Mercier Guy Mercier Eric Mercier & Rachel Cavanagh Pierre Mercier Claudine Mercier Simon Brouard Ronald Wayne Mercier & Julie Chaloux Diane Mercier	Verdun, QC Sainte-Sabine, QC Montréal, QC Montmagny, QC La Prairie, QC St-Augustin-de-Desmaures, QC Mirabel, QC Entrelacs, QC Nice, France Québec, QC Vermont, USA Dorval, QC	35,00 \$ 40,00 \$ 40,00 \$ 35,00 \$ 65,00 \$ 75,00 \$ 35,00 \$ 65,00 \$ 65,00 \$ 65,00 \$	15,00 \$	2021 2020 2021 2020 2021 2021 2022 2020 2021 2021 2021 2021 2022
	10.0			55,50 ¢		

F.....:....

# Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord

## TO YOU MERCIER OF AMERICA

To you! Mercier of America
To you! I wish to say
The love you make me feel.
For you I become romantic,
Sing afar your memories

1654, on the Beaupré Coast Julien and Marie have made a vow To love each other And so in their wake, Descendants spread out far and wide

1679, down in Acadia
Pierre and Andrée Martin said <u>I do</u>
Far from Beaubassin,
The Caud'becs went farther;
And finished their lives in Montmagny

1685, it was off to Neuville Pierre Mercier and Marguerite Lamain, Miller most useful, And, like a good wine, Several more have followed their lead

1725, a ride to Verchère.
Pierre-Simon, Marie-Renée Pineau.
A Mercier sexton
Working for the devouts
Happy humanitarian roots.

1761, and following the conquest, There came Charles and Marianne Lahaise. All over with defeats; L'Assomption celebrated; Charles and Marianne just made their vows.

1765, going to Louisiana, Jean Mercier, merchant from near Bordeaux, From Françoise de Mayeuse to Marie Gracieuse, They fed the next generations.

Lyrics and music
Jacques Mercier no. 341
(1987, 2012 and 2019)
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Association des Mercier
de l'Amérique du Nord
Translation
Lucie Mercier no.337
and Ian Campbell

# LOOKING BACK AT THE 2019 GATHERING AT LAC-MÉGANTIC

# **FOUR HAPPY WINNERS**



Registration fee FOR THE 2020 GATHERING

worth \$60:

Céline Chabot no. 28 and Doris Fontaine no.1563.

> Membership fee FOR ONE year worth \$35:

Maurice Mercier no. 1563 and Diane Mercier no. 1465

























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# 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary



Congratulations! To Céline Chabot and Gilmond Mercier no.28 from Sainte-Sabine who celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this past July.

# 65th Wedding Anniversary



Congratulations! To Doris Fontaine and Maurice Mercier no.1563 from New Hampshire who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary this past September.



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## **NELLY ARCAN BORN ISABELLE FORTIER**



Nelly Arcan, born Isabelle Fortier, on March 5, 1973 at Lac-Mégantic, Québec; daughter of Jacynthe Mercier and Germain Fortier died September 24<sup>th,</sup> 2009 in Montréal, was a Quebec novelist who specialized in autobiographical fiction.

Nelly Arcan aroused great curiosity by publicly admitting to having worked as an escort, thereby sometimes detracting attention from her literary efforts both in interviews and in criticism of those efforts. Her works, especially her first novel, **Putain** (2001) (tr. Whore, 2004) were freely inspired by her experiences as a sex trade worker. She took her own life at the age of 36.

## **Early Years and Publications**

Isabelle Fortier spent her childhood in the town of Lac-Mégantic, in the Eastern Townships. She was the younger of two siblings in a traditional, rather religious family. Her childhood was quite peaceful; she was described as a creative, brilliant and sensitive child. In 1994, she left home to study literature at the Université du Québec à Montréal. In the big city, she experienced what she called "a debauchery of values" and was exposed to lifestyles for which she was ill prepared. To pay for her studies, she worked as an escort, which gave her bitter first-hand knowledge of the sickness of today's society and the fate that often awaits women in this industry. Arcan was a rather gifted student: after completing her bachelor's degree, she immediately began working on her master's. At the same time, she wrote her first novel, *Putain* (2001; tr. *Whore*, 2004). She completed the manuscript in just a few months, and it was quickly accepted by the prestigious French publishing house Éditions du Seuil. It was at this time that she took the pen name Nelly Arcan, to establish some distance between herself and her story. Interest in *Putain* grew explosively in France; the book was nominated for the prestigious Médicis and Femina literary awards in 2002.

Arcan's next novel, *Folle*, was published in 2004, again by Éditions du Seuil (an English translation, *Hysteric*, came out in 2014). This work, too, was nominated for a Médicis award, although by now the public's enthusiasm had waned a bit. In 2007, Arcan published *L'enfant dans le miroir*, a story with illustrations by Pascale Bourguignon, describing the trials of adolescence and the start of the thrall of beauty. A longer version of this story, which has often been described as a "cruel fairy tale for young girls", appeared in the posthumous collection *Burga de chair* (2011; tr. *Burga of Skin*, 2014).

Also in 2007, Arcan published **«À ciel ouvert»** (tr. *Breakneck*, 2015), a more traditional less autobiographical narrative. Lastly, in 2009, *Paradis clef en main* (tr. *Exit*, 2011), which dealt with suicide, was published about two months after her own suicide. Although all of Nelly Arcan's books were reasonably well received by the critics, *Putain* remains her central work.

# **Talent, Image and Shame**

During her adolescence, Isabelle Fortier went through a rather difficult period in which she experienced a variety of mental health problems. She developed a troubled relationship with her body, which she never got over, subjecting herself to plastic surgery more than once. Nelly Arcan's appearance was attention- getting, and on several occasions, she felt humiliated or misunderstood when she was interviewed on television, notably in France on the program *Tout le monde en parle*, by controversial host Thierry Ardisson. In September 2007, when Arcan was interviewed on the Québec television program of the same name by host Guy A. Lepage, she was deeply upset by the questions, which placed little emphasis on her work. Shortly afterward she wrote a piece entitled *«La honte»* ("Shame"), which was published on her website and later in the collection *Burqa de chair* in 2011.

The heroines of Nelly Arcan's works, though they live in a world that oppresses and rejects them, would kill to please. Despite her immense talent, her own past as an escort and her stance as a critical witness of the prostitution milieu made her an easy prey for the media. Like her heroines, she struggled with her own image. But her admirers read her and supported her for these very same reasons. People still read and study her works. In 2014, the municipal media library of Lac-Mégantic, her hometown, was named after her.

# **Tragic Death**

On September 24, 2009, Nelly Arcan was found dead in her Plateau Mont-Royal apartment in Montréal. The novelist had already made several suicide attempts before eventually succeeding. Suicide was an ongoing presence both in her personal life and in her work: she addressed the topic in both *Putain* and in *Folle*, and in *Paradis clef en main*, it was the central concern. Before Arcan died, she sent e-mails to some of her friends, but did not release any message to the public. To them, she left the chance to discover her work, which is largely autobiographical. Nelly (2016), the third film by Québec director Anne Émond, was freely inspired by the life of Nelly Arcan.

**SOURCE**: Audrey Harvey, The Canadian Encyclopedia, Date of Publication online: August 22, 2016 - https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/nelly-arcan

# **WORKS by Nelly Arcan**:

<u>2001</u>: <u>Putain, Éditions du Seuil</u> (tr. Whore, 2004)

<u>2004</u> : Folle, <u>Éditions du Seuil</u> (tr. Hysteric, 2014)

<u>2007</u> : L'Enfant dans le miroir, illustrateur Bourguignon, Éditeur Marchand de feuilles.

<u>2007</u>: À ciel ouvert, , <u>Éditions du Seuil</u> (tr. Breakneck, 2015)

<u>2009</u> : Paradis, clef en main, Éditeur Coups de tête (tr. Exit, 2011)

<u>2011</u>: Burqa de chair, publication posthume - préface de <u>Nancy Huston</u>, <u>Éditions du Seuil</u> (tr. Burqa of Skin, 2014)

# JOSEPH-EUCLIDE MERCIER, M.D. PART 2

Text suggested by: Simon Brouard no.1624

<u>Reference</u>: Le Cordon "Souvenirs et Portraits" by Adolphe Robert, Manchester, New Hampshire, 1965.

In 1903, he married Frances Fontaine, in Sainte-Anne Church in Woonsocket. They had eight children: three sons and five daughters. Mrs. Mercier died in Fall River, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1948, at the age of 71. Dr. Mercier was a member of the following societies: Union médicale de Fall River; Fall River Medical Society; member of the medical staff of Sainte-Anne hospital, and vice-president until shortly before he died; medical examiner for schools for thirty-six years; director general of the Association Canado-Américaine (1932-1936 -- 1940-1956); medical examiner for the national societies; member and two-term president of Club Calumet; former vice-president of the Fédération des Sociétés de Fall River.

When the Saint-Sacrement parish was created in Fall River, in 1901, Dr. Mercier was among the founders. He remained one of the pillars of the parish, and following a major fundraising campaign in 1919, Dr. and Mrs. Mercier received an honorary cup for having raised the largest amount of money for the benefit of the parish.

In everyone's life, some time is regularly set aside for a favorite occupation: some people enjoy hunting and fishing, playing golf, snowshoeing or skiing, for example. People who are more sedentary will prefer to play cards, while others will enjoy travelling. There are also people who prefer the arts, such as theatre, music, dance, museums. We asked someone who knew Dr. Mercier what his favorite distraction was - his "hobby". The answer was: *La Société des Concours de français* (the Society of French Competitions).

It was in 1928 that Dr. Mercier, together with Mr. Germain Clément, thought of organizing French competitions under the auspices of the Fall River French teachers, affiliated with the Association Canado-Américaine, a movement that later expanded and became known as the Société des Concours de français (the Society of French Competitions).

Dr. Mercier got this idea from the following piece of advice given by Mgr Béliveau, former bishop of Saint-Boniface: "If you want some French, it is up to you to put some out there". That is exactly what Dr. Mercier did, putting it in the Fall River parish schools starting in 1928, so much so that he could write in 1952, that 3500 Franco-American children had participated in the annual competitions of the Société over a period of 24 years.

"The French competitions are a powerful factor for survival", he wrote in 1951. "Without the regular recurrence of these competitions, the teaching of French would become de facto optional in our schools, declining rapidly and soon disappearing."

#### He also said:

"that these competitions had another advantage; they showed once a year to parents and to the public, the value of teaching French in our schools. Such a public examination, in which hundreds of school children took part became a kind of justification and a kind of reward for the teachers dedicated to the survival of our language. In short, it is good for the students, whose interest for our survival is aroused early and it is good for the teachers, who see their efforts rewarded, despite the difficulties they have to overcome."

#### The Chancellor of the **Ordre du Mérite franco-américain** said:

"You have already celebrated, Sir, the Silver Anniversary of the *Société des Concours de français*, as well as the Golden Anniversary of your medical career. That is why the Steering Committee had decided to celebrate with you the Diamond Anniversary of your involvement with the Association Franco-Américaine – even though we are a little late – we are expressing publicly our admiration, our respect and our appreciation for your outstanding services on behalf of your compatriots, for the good example set by your life as a Christian, for your unwavering devotion to our spiritual and cultural values, for your spirit of charity and devotion in the relief of human suffering."

"In consequence thereof, as Chancellor of the Order and by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Steering Committee, I name Joseph-Euclide Mercier a member of the *Ordre du Mérite franco-américain*; I give him the tie and the honorary diploma and I invite him to sign our Book."

For Part 1 of this Article, see Le Mercien Vol.35 no.2

# ANDRÉ MATHIEU WAS SURELY ONE OF THE MOST READ AUTHORS FROM BEAUCE



The town of Saint-Honoré decided to honour author André Mathieu, a native son, during a Town Council meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup> of this year. The council named the author citizen emeritus of Saint-Honoré and gave his name to the municipal library. The documents were given to him by Mayor Herman Bolduc at his home in Lac-Mégantic.

André Mathieu was born on April 10, 1942, in Saint-Honoré-de-Shenley, in Beauce. He was a teacher and a merchant before becoming a full-time novelist. Except for his first work, for which the contract signed with a publisher did not turn out well, he self-published his works. Among the 65 literary works he wrote between 1977 and 2009, the equivalent of 27,000 pages, 17 were set in his native corner of Beauce, including the Saga des Grégoire, which adds up to seven volumes of more than 500 pages each, telling the history of his own family in Saint-Honoré. His book entitled Aurore, published in 1990, was adapted for a movie in 2005 by producer Luc Dionne.

André Mathieu had taken a lot of people by surprise, when he published a text on his website about his career as an author, his recent illness, his profound beliefs, his motivations and the disappointments in his life. He referred among other things to the fact that he had never received any government subsidies, being an avowed opponent of the system. He had very often talked against the library book-lending system, which he considered to be closer to outright theft and exploitation of authors than a sound way of disseminating books in general.

In early August 2009, his website predicted his death sometime in September, already providing for appropriate arrangements. Re-publishing dates for some of his works were shown as follows: L'orage (The Storm) and La bohémienne (the Bohemian), in 2009; La tourterelle triste (The Sad Turtle Dove), Les griffes du loup (The Wolf's Claws) and Noyade (Drowning), in 2010; Nathalie, Le grand voyage (The Great Voyage) and L'été d'Hélène (Hélène's Summer), in 2011; and so on up to 2015.

André Mathieu was honoured by the Town Council of Saint-Honoré-de-Shenley, granting him the *Ordre du mérite* de Saint-Honoré and, kind of ironically, they named the town library *Bibliothèque municipale André-Mathieu*. The town of Lac-Mégantic, where André Mathieu had been living for 17 years, also honoured him.

Québec had lost one of its most prolific authors, if not its most productive, since 1977.

André Mathieu passed away on Friday September 11, 2009, at the *Centre de santé et de services sociaux du Granit*, in Lac-Mégantic, at the age of 67.

He had learned in June of that year that he was suffering from an incurable cancer of the liver and he had refused palliative chemotherapy, which would have, in his own words "merely added months of pain to a few months of suffering". He had barely recovered from a painful ankle fracture and from a second heart attack, that had occurred on November 20, 2008.

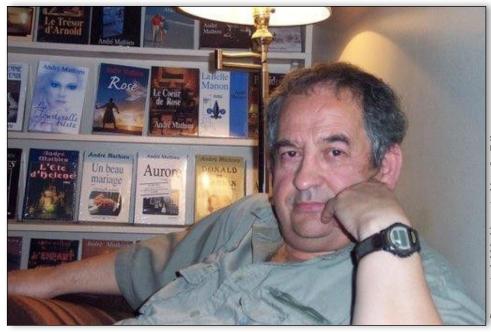
#### **Honours**

- The Ordre du mérite de Saint-Honoré (Beauce) was awarded to him by the Council of the town where he was born.
- The municipal library of Saint-Honoré (Beauce) was renamed "André-Mathieu", by the Town Council.
- The town of Lac-Mégantic, where André Mathieu had been living for 17 years, also honoured him.

#### Sources:

1- Ronald Martel, La Tribune, September 14, 2009 ronald.martel@latrib une.qc.ca 2- Internet site enbeauce.com

Note: André Mathieu had been a colleague of Gilmond and Jacques when they first started at Polyvalente Bélanger, in St-Martin-de-Beauce.



Source: André Mathieu - Archives La Tribune



560, rue Desbiens, Sainte-Madeleine (Québec) J0H 1S0 Site Internet : http://www.famillesmercier.org - Email : famillesmercier1985@gmail.com

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	CD: Mercier for centuries by Ernest Mercier (english version available)	5,00\$	3,00\$	
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May-2	Le Mercien Spring Vol. 36 nº1.
May-31	Annual Membership Renewal, May 31st
July-15	Le Mercien Summer Vol. 36 n°2.
	See you!

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