



NEW LOOK

No doubt you've noticed the newsletter's been revamped. For reasons of economy, colour photos are only on pages 1 and 2 and aren't the same in the French and English versions. Check them both out for the full picture...so to speak!

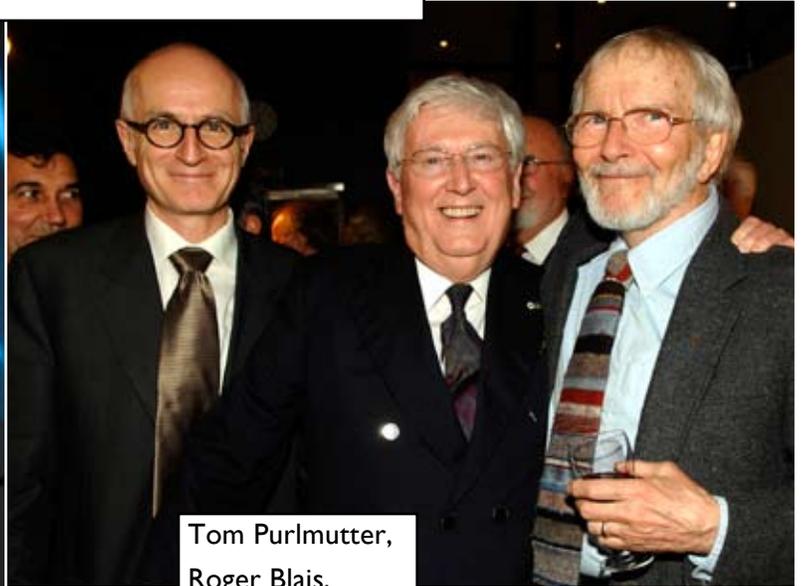
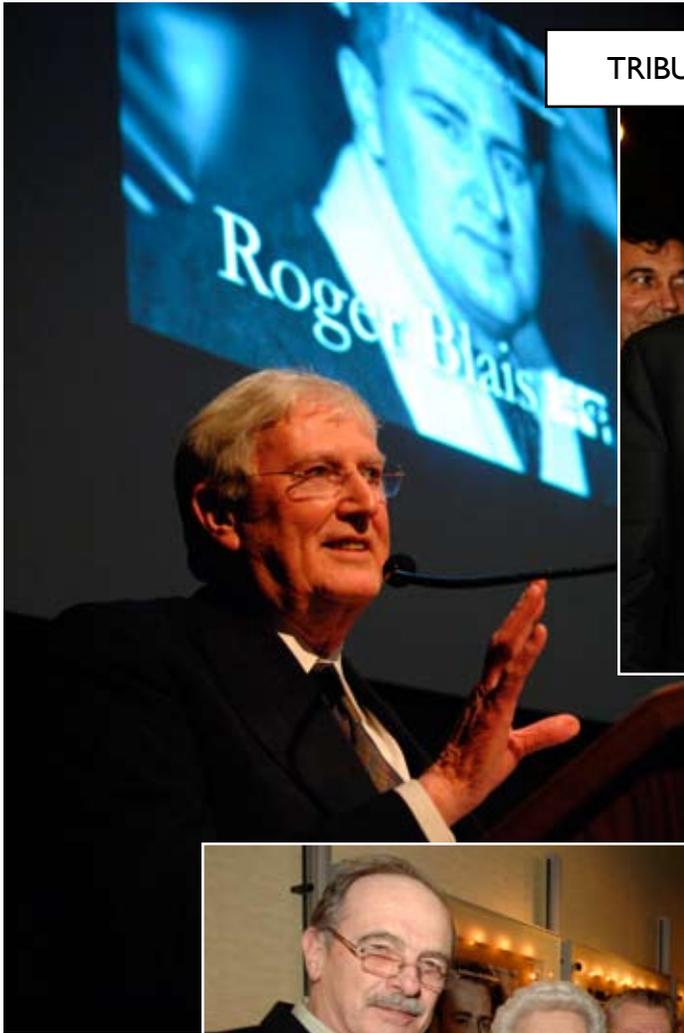
NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13

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JUNE 2007

TRIBUTE TO ROGER BLAIS



Tom Purlmutter,
Roger Blais,
Bob Verral



Micheal Hazel,
Jeannine Hopfinger,
Pierre Patry,
Roland Legault



Roger Blais,
Pierre Ducharme

Article on page 3

SUGAR SHACK, 2007

Anthony Kent



Following some wide-ranging research by Michael Hazel and Francine Simard, this year's sugaring-off was north of Montreal, but with a Western flair! Nearly 40 Club members drove in their own cars or with friends to Domaine Magaline, at Saint-Augustin-de-Mirabel, where Jacques Labelle from Ottawa joined the party.

We were given a guided tour of the stables and learned about piebald pintos and powerful percherons, as well as a llama and a hen, who was so chicken she had to share a stable enclosure with the rabbits, to save her from aggressive fellow chickens!

The restaurant had panoramic windows with delightful views of the snowy woods, as well as tempting traditional fare, including pea soup, pigs' ears, fluffy omelets and pancakes, with jugs of delicious maple syrup.

The meal was followed by an introduction to Western dancing, with the enthusiastic participation of many members, including Denis Cantin, Jeannine Hopfinger, Olivier Fougères, David Millar and Monique Létourneau. When the music died down we paid a visit to the "General Store", before heading home, after a great get-together with old friends.

On Thursday, March 22, 2007, guests poured into the CineRobotheque in downtown Montreal an hour before the official starting time of 6.00 p.m. They came to celebrate the extraordinary career and contribution to Canadian cinema of filmmaker, Roger Blais.

TRIBUTE TO ROGER BLAIS

Anthony Kent

Director, producer, scriptwriter and administrator, Roger played a fundamental role in the development of the NFB, always guided by his love of film.

In February, Roger celebrated his 90th birthday, but his warm smile, his elegant and youthful appearance, his energy and enthusiasm and his exceptional charm belie his years. Louise, Roger's wife of 61 years, and five of their six children (Chantale, Éric, Jean, Pascal and Pierre) were among the many guests at this very special evening.

After a very sociable cocktail hour, the guests filed into the theatre and occupied every seat and even the aisles. First of all, Claude Joli-Coeur, Interim Film Commissioner, presented three outgoing members of the NFB Board of Trustees. He thanked André H. Caron, Esmeralda M.A. Thornhill and Pierre Lessard for their valuable contribu-

tions to the Board and presented them with attractive plaques in recognition of their years of service.

An old friend of Roger and his family, Hélène-Andrée Bizier, introduced Marcel Carrière, who paid his own respects to Roger, before reading a tribute from the outgoing Film Commissioner,

Jacques Bensimon. Madame Bizier then introduced in turn, Jean-Louis Roux, André Caron, Jean Roy, Jacques Languirand and Michel Brault. They each recounted anecdotes and admiring - and amusing - memories of Roger Blais and his role at the NFB, since those early days at the saw-mill in Ottawa, in 1945.

The audience was then treated to a superb montage of excerpts from some of Roger's films, from 1945 onwards, which brought back many delightful memories. We then signed a large souvenir poster, exchanged stories, said a few more words to a smiling Roger, who somehow found time for all his friends - and then reluctantly made our way out into the cold March air. But we were all warmed by this memorable evening with Roger Blais.

THANK YOU, MARIE!

A big thank you to Marie FitzGerald for her seven years managing the finances for the Club and for her involvement at various levels of the organization. Marie left the committee last December. Enjoy your retirement, Marie. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

NEW MEMBERS

Marie Tonto-Donato

Nicole Pelletier Sirois

Newsletter Coordinator:

Colette Gendron

Photos:

Micheal Hazel

Translation:

NFB Translation Services

Printing:

NFB Print Shop

OUR CHAMPION VOLUNTEERS

A Club like ours couldn't function without its volunteers looking after things like preparing mail, keeping correspondence up to date, organizing events or writing articles ...and much more!

We'd like to warmly thank everyone who lends their time so the Club can continue its activities.

MEMBERS' LETTERS

Hi,

In the last newsletter, you asked us to tell you about ourselves. Well, more than three years ago, I and my husband, Jean-Pierre Fourez, and some friends founded the community newspaper Le Saint-Armand, which comes out every two months. I'm in charge of coordinating and revising the texts. The next edition will be in tabloid format with 12 pages and anyone who'd like to take a peek is invited to go to the Saint-Armand Web site at: <http://saint-armand.esm.qc.ca>.

Long live the Newsletter and all my old NFB friends and colleagues, whom I miss very much.

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DEATH

Jean de Bellefeuille died on March 18, 2007. He was 97.

NEW COMMISSIONNER

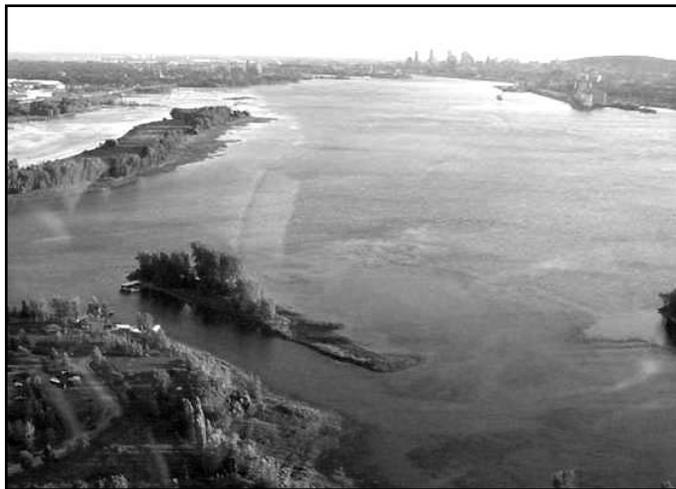
The appointment of Tom Perlmutter, of Montreal, as Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada, is effective since June 11. He had been Director general of the National Film Board's English Program since 2001.

Mr. Perlmutter has written extensively on film in England and Canada and has served as moderator or panellist on numerous industry panels and workshops, both domestically and internationally. He has spoken on a range of themes including co-production issues, the nature of diversity in the film industry, science programming, technological innovation and socially innovative media.

THE CLUB'S ACTIVITIES

OUTDOORS DAY, 2007

Jean Glinn, Anthony Kent



This year, the NFB Club and NFB Social Committee have decided to organize a day outdoors, giving us the chance to get together in a truly unique location. The two groups are inviting their members (or staff) to come and spend a "Zen Day" on a private island, in the middle of the Saint Lawrence River!

In recent years, we have had similar get-togethers at the Golf Tournament at Ste.-Adele. In order to create a more cozy atmosphere, this year we have reserved a private island (belonging to the Navark company), so that we can enjoy a spectacular day together, with an exceptional view of the city of Montreal.

A brief assessment will be circulated in the weeks following this event, which will be held on Thursday, June 21, 2007.

DON'T MISS!

- * Golf Day, in August or September (to be decided)
- * NFB Film Day, in the fall

Last November, I went to Brazzaville, in the Republic of the Congo, to give a training seminar on developing and producing school textbooks.

Barely a year ago, what the name Congo conjured up for me was, of course, exoticism and adventure, but I didn't really know anything more about it than that. I have since learned – though maybe you already knew – that there are two Congos: the one formerly colonized by the Belgians, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire); and the one colonized by the French, the Republic of the Congo, better known as Congo-Brazzaville. The two are separated by the Congo River. Though I had long dreamed of discovering sub-Saharan Africa, I honestly didn't know what to expect.

I bravely set off alone but, once there, luckily met a few fellow Canadians who had also been recruited to give training seminars. So I arrived in the city of Brazzaville one fine November evening. As soon as the airplane doors opened, I was hit by that tropical heat and humidity that immediately make you wilt. Then with the unbelievable crush of people in the arrivals area, the not very serious customs clearance, the young porters who descend on you like a cloud of mosquitoes, the cries and shouts all around, the hot, steamy air, and the luggage that **never** appeared on the carousel... I finally had more than I could take.

I don't know if you're like me but in a foreign country I always find that the most difficult part of the trip is the airport or the train station. If you manage to get out without being cheated of your last cent, the worst is over! At any rate, that's what I said to comfort myself when I got to the hotel that evening. But I had the basic equipment I needed to confront deepest, darkest Africa: my toothbrush and my malaria pills. And nothing else.

TRIP TO THE CONGO

Colette Gendron

Having arrived on a Friday evening, I had all weekend to recover from my emotions and get organized

for the seminar, which began on Monday morning. My goals that Saturday morning were

to find suitable clothing and explore the city. I thus ended up in the Poto-Poto neighbourhood, where I experienced my first African market. Dirt roads full of litter, dangerous-



looking puddles (it was the rainy season), and scorching heat (I was still in my heavy jeans and turtleneck sweater). How to find my way through all that, how to go about it? To make do until I got my luggage, I decided buy an Indian(!) blouse and a pair of sandals, which looked really scruffy within a couple of days. (Little did I know then that I would never again see the summer clothes I had so carefully chosen.) Later, I added a few boubous to my wardrobe. Though they were really very pretty, they were too long for me and kept

tripping me up. But there's a good side to everything: the Congolese really appreciated how fast I adapted to the local customs!

Despite the warnings not to walk alone, I went on a little exploratory journey downtown. I never understood what the dangers were since I met only friendly, smiling people. Admittedly, although it's the capital city, Brazzaville is not all that big (under a million inhabitants). It's fairly quiet and calmly looks across at Kinshasa, its neighbour on the other side of the river.

On Monday morning, dressed in my rather odd outfit, I reported to my place of work, an educational research institute. That's where I had my real culture shock. Here, we see lots of images of Africa – starving children, appalling scenes of war – but the images remain abstract for us. There, I found myself face to face with people who had a similar social status to mine, who were educated and curious, but were working in such deprived conditions that I couldn't get over it. I won't go into the sorry state of the building and furniture (the Congo is recovering from a five- or six-year civil war that ended in 2000) or the water that fell in torrents from the sky but never made its way into the faucets. The Institute's library had only a few reference works, paper was meted out practically by the sheet, and pencils were a rare commodity. The least little project or the tiniest initiative took enormous imagination and resourcefulness. And most of all: information! Which is hard to come by, given the scarcity and inaccessibility of sources!



What really surprised – and delighted – me, though, was how easily I could connect with the twenty or so participants in the seminar. I soon felt like part of one big family, very close to them, laughing together and making light of the many problems of life in the Congo. To use the computer, we had to have two to three people per workstation. We also had to cope with numerous power outages, software versions that were different from one computer to the next, and equipment that kept breaking down in the intense heat of the afternoon and the dust that only the foolhardy would try to get rid of. But I never had so much fun in my life; I felt like a kid again. I don't know if this is a typically African experience or if it was due my being so far from home, but I felt as if in a kind of a trance. I could have stayed there forever with my simple, warm, endearing friends.

I'm still in e-mail contact with some of them, and I can only hope that I will be able to see them again one day.

If you are interested in volunteering abroad, you might want to check out the following Web sites:

<http://www.ccic.ca/e/home/index.shtml>

<http://www.uniterra.ca/uniterra/en/index.html>

<http://www.ceso-saco.com/english//index.php>