



DIARY	December 7:	Christmas dinner at <i>Le Bordelais</i>
	January:	Nostalgia film day
	February:	First-run movie
	March:	Sugaring off
	June:	Cruise
	August 13:	Golf tournament

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CRANBERRIES AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

By Nicole Fréchette

A happy band of retirees enjoyed every moment of their three-part outing on October 16, 2008. On a comfy coach driven smoothly by Éric under the infallible guidance of his GPS, we made it to our destinations. First stop: Saint-Louis-de-Blanford in the Bois-Francs region, to visit a cranberry farm. After a guided tour before a series of explanatory panels, we set off for the fields, strapped into a trailer pulled by a tractor. The cranberry – atoca to the Huron and airelle to Brother Marie-Victorin – is related to the blueberry and grows in the beds of ancient glaciers. Aboriginal people have long been aware of the cranberry’s curative powers and used it in their cooking. At harvest time, the fields are flooded and the berries, which contain four pockets of air, float to the surface, where they can easily be collected. We looked at tempting ... **page 4**



FILM DAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2008

By Nicole Fréchette

More than 40 retirees attended our day of screenings in the Théâtre Pierre-Perrault. In the morning we watched the animated short **Retouches** by Georges Schwizgebel, the prolific and respected Swiss animator whose films are characterized by skilful brushstrokes evoking ... **page 6**



Luc Bourdon, Claire Renaud, Claire Provençal, Marie-Neige Diaz, Francine Simard

**Part of the series: LIFE AFTER THE NFB
DAVID DE VOLPI, GRANDFATHER AND OUTDOORSMAN**

By Anthony Kent

Here we are on September 26, in David’s garden on the lake near St. Sauveur. David, what have you done since you left the Film Board?

Well, when I left, I promptly moved to the country more or less full-time. We had an apartment in the city, but we lived mostly in the country. During the first 5 or 6 years, I shot a number of documentaries in Montreal, including a film with David Fennario, a film with NASA in the high Arctic and California and two... **page 5**



Growing vines in volcanic soil.



The road, reserved for tour buses, was built for one of Franco's visits in 1950

NEWS FROM OTTAWA

By Jacques Labelle

On Sunday, October 26, Anne Taylor welcomed around 30 Ottawa ex-NFBers to her pretty Victorian house. This little "4 à 7" was held to mark the official closing of the NFB's Ottawa office. It was also an occasion to give a retirement present to Danielle Dionne, Commissioner's administrative assistant at the same office. Dear Danielle shed a tear or two as usual! Well, the party got going and everyone enjoyed seeing each other after all these years, and some had even brought NFB-related articles from back in the day (books, photos, 16 mm film reels, documents, etc.). So a very happy occasion, though short, with all those good memories to share!



Rachelle Cournoyer and Sandra MacDonald

17 DAYS CRUISING THE ATLANTIC AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

By Marie-Pierre Tremblay

Three thousand four hundred bottles of wine, 10,991 kilos of beef, 952 kilos of lobster, 9,700 litres of milk, 4,630 kilos of chicken, 9,235 dozen eggs... The hold was filled to capacity to satisfy the needs of the 1,900 passengers and 950 crew on board the Galaxy, heading out from Miami to Rome.

I won't mention all the stops – at Agadir, Valencia, Barcelona, Cannes and Florence. I'll just tell you about the places I really fell for – Tenerife and Lanzarote, two of the seven main islands of Spain's Canary Islands. Two completely black volcanic formations roasting in the sun, 115 km off the African coast.

Tenerife. Despite the fact there is no water on the island (rainwater is collected after filtering through the porous ground), the people grow potatoes, tomatoes and fruit, mainly in terraced gardens and even in the beds of former rivers. There is also a little fishing, but it represents only a very small part of people's income. They live mainly from tourism and oil refineries. Dragon trees, birds of paradise, canaries and pine trees, laurisilva, cactus, lizards, rabbits and feral cats share a territory that used to be home to giant wild dogs (canes), whence the name of the archipelago.

The most surprising thing we saw was man-made: bridges, low walls, sidewalks... everything made of the black volcanic rock, in sharp contrast with the yellow, white and pink houses. The coastline is jagged and the beaches are black, too; you have to go further south on the island to see the golden sand imported from Africa. On one of the public squares in the capital, Santa Cruz, two Peruvians were playing their pan flutes, parrots perched on their shoulders, waiting for the tourists to take that obligatory souvenir photo. A Macdonald's, discreetly visible, vies with small cafés and shops filled with Made in China goodies for the attention of visitors. Here, as in Lanzarote, embroidery is the most popular kind of handiwork, in tablecloths, napkins, aprons and the like.

On the following day, we dropped anchor at Arrecife, the capital of Lanzarote and a UNESCO biosphere reserve. It was a shock. Three-quarters of the island is covered in the lava spewed out by the 100 volcanoes that erupted between September 1730 and April 1736, burying a dozen or so villages and the best farm land on the island. The last volcanic explosions were recorded in 1824.

We couldn't get over the lunar landscape, with its few scattered bushes. There are no birds. At the Montaña del Fuego, there are still tremors in the subsoil and the ground is **17 DAYS ...** burning hot. Staff at Timanfaya National



Park demonstrated the volcano's power by sticking a branch into a shallow hole; it burst into flames. Water poured into a pipe quickly became a column of steam (at 2 metres down, the temperature is over 400°C). A little further on, a restaurant built by the painter and architect Manrique used the heat from a volcanic chimney (700°C at a depth of 27 metres) to barbecue its meat.

Still more surprises were in store. We'd been looking at the salt marshes from a long way off, but finally we made it over to La Geria, a region known around the world for its malmsey wine. Growing grapes here is painstaking. Every plant is protected by a wall of stones with the roots buried in the arable land and covered with a layer of lava particles to absorb the dew and deliver moisture to the plants.

One could write pages about these islands and the traces that human settlement and weather have left. We would have liked to see Tenerife's observatory, and Las Cañadas del Teide National Park, with its 29 km diameter crater and the highest elevation in Spain at 3,718 metres. Not to mention the six pyramids at Güimar, very like those of the Maya and the Aztecs. We had to leave Lanzarote without seeing the concert hall designed by Manrique or the undersea lagoon with crabs found only here. Never mind the art galleries, museums and the gardens...

If you go to Portugal, Spain or Morocco, do take a side trip to the Canaries. You'll be amazed.

A CLEARER VISION OF THE FUTURE

By Anthony Kent

Some aspects of the ageing process cannot be reversed, but our generation is very fortunate that at least one of our fading faculties can be dramatically improved. As we grow older, many of us find that our vision is becoming clouded. Cataracts are the reason in over 90% of these cases, although certain diseases, medications or injuries can also cause this clouding. I am deliberately going to give some very basic information, assuming that most of my readers know as little about the process as I did.

The cataract forms on the lens of the eye which is located just behind the iris and works like the lens of a camera, picking up images and focusing the light, colours and shapes on to the retina at the back of the eye. When this lens becomes clouded, some of the light and images do not reach the retina, because we have cataracts. This old clouded lens has to be replaced with a new one.

The surgeon makes a small incision in the eye, "vacuums" the old lens out and replaces it with an implanted artificial lens. This outpatient procedure is completed within a very

few hours and is amazingly pain-free, because the eye is numbed with anesthetic drops. The actual operation takes approximately twenty minutes. Eye drops are prescribed (for a four-week period) to help prevent infection and to assist the healing process. I also had to wear an eye shield for the first two days and every night for the first week. The second operation was performed five weeks after the first.

My optometrist had been telling me for five or six years that cataracts were gradually forming in both eyes. Images were not so clear and newspapers looked much yellower – regardless of their content! I was referred to an ophthalmologist, who specializes in cataract surgery. He confirmed that it was time to operate and suddenly I was faced with a wider choice of replacement lenses than expected - and only six weeks until the first operation! Incidentally, cataract surgery is officially "fast-tracked" in Quebec.

Friends had advised me that I would have to choose between hard and soft monofocal lenses, which usually provide crisp distant vision, but often necessitate glasses for near vision. These lenses are fully covered by Medicare and our Health Insurance Plan. Clinics may also offer a new multifocal lens, in my case it is the AcrySof® ReSTOR® IOL (intraocular lens), that actually restores a full range of vision, both for activities

A CLEARER ... like reading and at a distance (for driving or watching films, for example). Unfortunately, these multifocal lenses are not fully covered – and they cost a total for both eyes of \$2,300.00.



In addition to this figure, there were charges of \$125.00 for the biometry exam and \$800.00 for the refractive examination, which includes a detailed evaluation of the eyes and their "topography".

Under the PSHCP, we are only reimbursed up to 80% of \$850.00 per lens and the first exam, plus a smaller percentage of the \$800.00. However, 81% of patients with the new multifocal lenses apparently do not require glasses – to read or to drive! Based on the average cost of glasses with prescription lenses, it seemed clear that the additional outlay for the multifocal lenses would rapidly be amortized by the savings on the cost of glasses – quite apart from the convenience factor – and my habit of losing sunglasses! So I decided to go ahead with the new multifocal lenses – and feel that this was a really good decision for me.

After both operations I could read and watch television and lead a normal life, except that strenuous activities, like swimming and dancing - and make-up – are not allowed for the first two weeks! There was no pain in the recovery period.

GRANT MUNRO, OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF CANADA

By Anthony Kent

Could you tell us about your investiture ceremony for the Order of Canada in Quebec City last month, please?

Yes, because of the 400th Anniversary, it was held in Quebec City. What can I tell you about it - it was magic!

We travelled up the day before, first class, by train. They had wheelchairs, so that was lovely. I went with Sidonie Kerr and my British neighbour, Sheila Lyons – and my nephew was there also. Quebec was just superb. Of course I have seen 85 autumns, but I have never seen an autumn like this. It was spectacular. The train journey was just great.

It was held at the Citadelle and they put us up at the Quebec Hilton. It couldn't have been nicer. They asked us if we had any special needs. I had had a couple of martinis and I said: "Just a wheelchair and a package of Depends." But I don't think they were amused! As for the Governor General, words cannot describe her extraordinary charm and warmth. You can see by the photos. *You wouldn't let her go!*

No, I wouldn't let her go! I shouldn't tell you what she said to me. I don't remember what I said to her because her husband was sitting there and my nephew said: "You know the minute they read your name and you had to get up, her husband got up right away to come over to shake your hand." As she invested me as an Officer of the Order of Canada, slipping the ribbon over my head, I whispered: "Your appointment will go down as one of the highlights in Canadian history." She replied: "Do you know what my husband said about you, he called you a Monument!" I don't know whether that's good or not! I have a friend who once had a fortune cookie that read: "Be kind to pigeons, a statue will be made of you." That's all I could think of when she said Monument....

CRANBERRIES ... displays of cranberry products, including the delectable canneberges à la russe, cranberries and syrup in vodka that can be drizzled over cake, yoghurt or ice cream. There's no need to wait for Christmas to enjoy cranberry delights: they're excellent for your health and come in many forms, including juice, jellies, jams, chutneys, vinegar and flavoured oil.

The second stop was the Mont Saint-Hilaire fine arts museum to discover Armand Vaillancourt's Sculpture de masse exhibition, held between October 5 and November 30. In addition to the works he has produced as a sculptor, Vaillancourt has also painted, made etchings, and been involved in theatre and "happenings." He has over three thousand catalogued works in bronze, welded metal, concrete, stone and burnt wood, and has even sculpted a living tree on Durocher Street. With his Christ-like look and long white hair, Vaillancourt is a warrior, loudly proclaiming

The investiture was at 10.30 in the morning, followed by a wonderful reception. We were all given time for an afternoon nap and before we knew it, it was time to change into our rented tuxedos and black ties, for a spectacular dinner at the Citadelle. It was an all-Canadian menu and the wines were superb.



*MCpl Jean-François Néron,
September 13, 2008, Rideau Hall
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the Governor General of Canada*

The Governor General joined us later, for drinks and dancing. She danced with her husband quite a bit. I realized how really old I am, because there was a chap playing the piano, not terribly well, and they were asking for requests and a lot were in French. So I asked for three French requests. Well, I was so old that they had never heard these, except for 'Milord'. They had heard of 'Milord'!

How did you first hear about your Honorary Doctorate from Concordia University?

The President called, asking me:

"Would you accept an Honorary Doctorate?" I gasped, then said: "Would I have to rent a tuxedo?" There was a long pause and he said: "No, you will not have to rent a tuxedo!" Even after a remark like that, they still gave me the degree! They sent a chauffeur-driven limousine. Concordia was most generous, allowing me to invite a large number of old colleagues and friends to the magnificent dinner. All told, it was a perfect day!

So now you are officially entitled to put LL D after your name?

Yes. I'm Dr. Munro. My father was a doctor in Winnipeg with a large practice and was hoping that I would inherit. My father said: "Don't blame me if you want to pursue an art career - you are going to starve!"

his ongoing battle against oppression and never ceasing to remind us of the importance of artistic expression in society. His monumental sculptures were strong, silent witnesses to the early days of Quebec's Quiet Revolution.

The last stop was Otterburn Park, to visit Belgian chocolate-maker La Cabosse d'Or, where we stocked up on fine chocolate, the delicious and irresistible end product of the cocoa bean: pralines, truffles, coffee creams, caramels, maple creams and cherry creams all dropped happily into our little boxes. Over one thousand years ago, the Mayans drank roasted and ground cocoa beans boiled in spiced water. They called the drink xocoati. Others were more wary: In 1624, Viennese monks were forbidden to eat anything made from cocoa beans because chocolate, it was said, would arouse their passions. Perhaps...let's just have some more, to see for ourselves how good – and good for us – it really is. After all, chocolate is the food of the gods!

DAVID DE VOLPI... dramas and a couple of docudramas in Newfoundland. I also did a large part of the shooting for an IMAX film on the caribou in Northern Quebec, called **True North**.

All this time, I was also doing lots of woodworking, including building most of this house here in the country. The octagonal tower above us on the house was built entirely for my grandchildren....a magical room. I did most of it. The tree house is underway right over there. I haven't done much on it, because I was converting one of the bedrooms into a TV and stereo room.

I haven't shot a film in the last five years. Indirectly, I am producing grandchildren! We have five granddaughters and one grandson. They are coming tomorrow to visit, sometimes four at a time, sometimes five. I don't think we've ever had all six at one time. They are a large part of our lives.

I know you are by nature a handyman and an outdoorsman. What else have you been doing in the past few years?



Up there I have a wonderful workshop, which I largely built myself. I average an hour or two working there every day, some days much more, some days not at all. I do a tremendous amount of cross-country skiing in the winter. The trails start about a kilometre down the road. I occasionally go on groomed trails but prefer the wilder ones. We do a lot of hiking and biking in the summer. I also managed to do a bit of teaching at Concordia. I am still looking at doing films, (there are a couple that have been waiting for financing for ages,) but I think I'd rather just watch them now...

We love living in the country. It is very beautiful and quiet. There are many animals here (which Katy doesn't appreciate). The raccoons are smarter than I am and get into the house quite often! I've had to trap them and move them to places I won't mention! We see lots and lots of birds, white-tailed deer, some moose, squirrels, chipmunks and even flying squirrels, which are quite rare.

Katy and I travelled to Italy last year, including Rome and Florence. We drove through Tuscany for a couple of weeks and loved it. I'd go back again any time!

I've been vacationing a few times in the Arctic, hiking and canoeing on Baffin Island. Auyuittuq is an amazing national park on Baffin Island. We flew to Pangnirtung and chartered a little boat for a two-hour ride to the beginning of the park. There are dramatic mountains rising 6,000 feet. Hiking there, you are pretty close to the great Arctic wilderness. We also went canoeing in south Baffin Island, which was not as

spectacular, but just as beautiful, with lots more wildlife. We didn't see a soul in ten days on the river, but we saw caribou, wolves and peregrine falcons, among others – but no arctic hares – maybe the wolves got to them first! I spent a lot of time working in the North and now I have the time to just take a holiday there.

Now, a direct question! You are a vegan, so how do you manage when you're up north?

I had to eat meat! When we arrived at the end of our canoe trip, we were staying at an Inuit home in a village called Kimmirut and supper was fresh caribou shot that day, scallops they had picked off the beach, fresh mussels and arctic char they'd just caught. So I had to eat it, but we also carry our own food, a large part of it vegetarian!

Did you make those Arctic trips after you had your operations?

Both holidays were after the cancer. In fact we were supposed to go the year I got sick with colon cancer - and I must say that the Medicare system took great care of me. I didn't have to wait for anything. As soon as they found out I had cancer I was treated right away, five operations in six months at Montreal General. I bounced back pretty well. There are some long-term consequences but none of them are really debilitating. I've regained way over the amount of weight I'd lost, which was around 40-50 lbs. I'd say there are really no limitations at all in what I do now...

Thanks very much, David.

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SOON ON YOUR SCREEN!

For it's 70th anniversary, the NFB will post on the Web more than 500 films of the collection.

Keep in touch!

PLEASE NOTE

NFB Club status are now available on our Web site.

For those interested in having a paper copy please contact the Club committee.

100 KM AND OVER CONTEST

*The winners: Richard Lesage,
Lois Siegel and Grace Avrith*

Thanks to all participants!

NOOKS AND CRANNIES OF THE NET

A column in which we share with you curious, amusing or unusual Web sites. Something to interest everyone. Send us your latest finds so that we can all benefit!

Do-it-yourselfers, would-be home renovators and people who are looking to buy a house or have one built should take a look at this exceptional site: http://www.guidesperrier.com/guides_perrier/habitation/frame_accueil.html (French only). Absolutely everything you've ever wanted to know about housing, inside and out, from top to bottom, is explained, analysed and compared. And if you can't find the information you're looking for, feel free to write directly to the site author: he'll send you a prompt, polite, precise answer to your question.

Do you enjoy playing with words, stringing them together in unorthodox ways, finding unusual or offbeat meanings for them? If so, then <http://www.barbery.net/lebarbery/index.htm#> (French only) is the perfect site for you. As an added plus, the site creator has created some tools to help you get the most out of your efforts at versification, so that you can really impress your family and friends. But watch out: hours and hours of addictive wordplay are guaranteed!

Who doesn't know Google Maps, Yahoo Maps or Mapquest? These map sites can be really useful for drawing up an itinerary, calculating the length of a trip or finding hotels, restaurants or sites of interest along your way. So why tell you about another site (<http://www.fr.map24.com/>) that does pretty much the same thing? Chiefly because it also does a whole lot more: let your curiosity get the better of you, go and check it out. You can follow your virtual route in 2-D

FILM DAY ... figures and forming worlds of their own. His many works form a coherent, unique whole, testimony to the artist's intellectual scope.

I then introduced Luc Bourdon, who talked about the birth of his film *The Memory of Angels*. He says the angels are the filmmakers of the past, who may have disappeared but who live in our thoughts, in our hearts and through their works. This adventure in film consists solely of clips from about 125 NFB films chosen for their vision of Montreal to create a sense of life here 50 years ago: transport, the port, Parc Lafontaine, clothes, smoking, the pretty face of the young Geneviève Bujold, Dominique Michel singing the wonderful Raymond Lévesque, sidewalks and lanes alive with children – and clothes lines. Hats off to you, Luc!

We took a restorative break in the cafeteria – buffet and wine in our own section – and then returned to the theatre, where Anthony Kent introduced Julie Roy, producer of *The*

or 3-D, move along at the speed that traffic conditions allow (in real time!), choose your country and language settings for your documents ... and loads more!

“My homeland is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I live in the capital, Kinshasa, where I've been working as a journalist for **Radio Okapi** since April 2003. On the blog I started in September 2005, I keep readers posted about what I've been thinking and what's been happening where I live.” So writes Cédric Kalonji, a twenty-something Congolese writer whose blog <http://www.congoblog.net/> (French only, English version promised soon) lets you experience first-hand what day-to-day life is like in the Congo. Each blog entry, headed with an intriguing photograph, makes you really feel as though you're walking through this huge, sprawling (and, alas, very troubled) country. It's an opportunity to do some armchair travelling and to get an insider's view on things that you probably wouldn't see even if you did visit. (For a review in English, by Jennifer Brea, of Kalonji's blog and photographs, check out <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2008/06/06/cedric-kalonji-on-photographing-congo/>.)

Do you know where Akrotiri is? What the infant mortality rate is in Belarus? How many telephone lines there are in the Vatican? If you do, then you must be a regular visitor to the Web site of the CIA (yes, the real CIA): <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>. Even better than an encyclopaedia, since it's updated every two weeks, the site provides tons of information and statistical data on every country and territory in the world. Just how big is Canada, anyway? 9,984,670 km², everyone knows that. But what the land/water proportion is, again in km²? Hmm? Now you know where to find the answer.

Necktie/Le nœud cravate. This animation is a result of the Cinéaste recherché(e) contest, which for 20 years has been helping emerging filmmakers make their first professional work. Jean-François Lévesque amazed and delighted us with his social satire of a nine-to-fiver who re-discovers the joys of the accordion.

Finally, we took in Nick de Pencier's *Four Wings and a Prayer*, on the monarch butterfly's breathtaking and perilous journey from Canada over the United States to Mexico, where they nestle in the trees for five months. For a human, this journey would be the equivalent of walking the circumference of the Earth six times over! It's an amazing sight, those millions of butterflies, and it's one that needs to be preserved from the attendant man-made dangers.

Very proud to have worked at the National Film Board of Canada, everyone really enjoyed this sociable day of chatting with old friends in between screenings of these recent works.