

The French Review

From the Editor's Desk

As those of you who attended know, the annual convention held in Quebec City from July 7–10 was a smashing success. 850 of us were there, the largest group since 1989 in Paris. The Québécois gave us a wonderful welcome, and the many excursions and other special events were fully subscribed to and enjoyed. It was good to meet a representative of the Cuban Association of Teachers of French after the Cuban delegation was refused visas for the Atlanta convention. A number of québécois dignitaries attended and spoke at the opening ceremony, the welcome luncheon, and the awards banquet. Yanick Godbout, who helped us in so many ways, prepared a reception sponsored by the Quebec Ministry of International Relations. Quebec City was as magnificent as ever, and the views of the Saint Lawrence were spectacular.

One of the main highlights of the convention was the keynote address of Julie Barlow and Jean-Benoit Nadeau, authors of *Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong*. They offered a witty introduction to their work-in-progress, *L'Aventure de la langue française/The Story of French*. For example, Julie wanted to buy a tank top in one of the "grands magasins" in Paris and used the québécois word, "camisole." All that the store clerks could do was laugh each time she repeated the word because for them it meant "strait jacket," the French for "tank top" being "débardeur." Jean-Benoit had similar problems using the word "reçu" for receipt when the store clerk expected to hear "ticket." But another time, when Jean-Benoit asked for the "ticket" in a different store, the clerk responded that he should say "fiche."

Other highlights included an Authors' Round Table of québécois writers Aude, Michael Garneau, and Denise Boucher organized by Myrna Delson-Karan; two québécois music Round Tables put together by David Graham; the French-Canadian Legends Theater Workshop; and a session entitled "Le Conte au Québec: hier, aujourd'hui et demain," with Jocelyn Bérubé, Jean-Marc Massie, Claudette l'Heureux, Yves Robitaille, and André Lemelin, all québécois *conteurs*. An added attraction was the inauguration of the AATF Book Club, the title of which was "An Encounter with Quebec Literature." It was chaired by Myrna Delson-Karan. The brainchild of AATF President Margot Steinhart, the Book Club will become a permanent feature of the annual convention. Next year one of the books considered will be *Le Gone du Chaâba* by the award-winning novelist and sociologist, Azouz Begag. Since July the *Ministre délégué à la Promotion de l'Égalité des Chances*, Minister Begag will be the keynote speaker for next year's convention to be held in Milwaukee. He will discuss his first six months as Minister. Begag will also screen the movie of *Le Gone du Chaâba* produced in 1998 and will recount his experience as screenwriter for the recently released "Camping à la ferme."

In Quebec City we once again held a "Meet the Editors" session, and fourteen of us attended the annual Editors' Luncheon at les Quatre Saisons restaurant on the Grande Allée. I am pleased to announce the addition of four more Assistant Editors to the editorial staff of the *French Review*: Barbara Bullock will join Clyde Thogmartin for Linguistics and Derek Schilling, Laurence Porter, and Marie-Agnès Sourieau will evaluate literary articles. Marie-Agnès will succeed Mildred Mortimer, who has served as one of our Assistant Editors for francophone literature for the past eight years. We wish Mimi well in her future endeavors,

including a year in Algeria, and thank her for helping to shape the francophone presence in the *French Review*.

We have now chosen the articles for the special issue, *Cinémas*, to be published in May 2006 in honor of the annual meeting of the AATF to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin July 5–8. It should be an outstanding issue. Do plan to attend this convention, where, in addition to the screening of *Le Gone du Chaâba*, there will be a number of Round Tables on cinema, the teaching of film, etc.

Polls taken in the summer of 2005 suggested that trust between the French and Americans has slipped to its lowest level in seventeen years. Television talk show hosts and reporters like MSNBC's Tucker Carlson and John Gibson of Fox News continue to bash the French, something that does not help the situation (For more on French-bashing consult miquelon.org and articles by Polly Platt and myself found in the Spring/Summer 2005 issue of *Le Magazine*, a publication of the Federation of Alliances Françaises USA: 28–32; 12–16). In spite of this negative treatment on national networks, I sense that enrollments are holding their own and that our annual event, La Semaine du français, coupled with the advocacy programs now under way as part of an AATF initiative are turning the tide and contributing to a better climate. Do let me know how things are going in your part of the country.

Je vous souhaite de très bonnes vacances et une excellente nouvelle année!

Christopher P. Pinet