

AFGSnews



Preserving History...Connecting Generations for 35 Years

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AFGS CELEBRATES 35TH ANNIVERSARY

It started with a vacation to Canada in August 1976. Henri Leblond, a member of the French Canadian social club, LeFoyer, in Pawtucket visited the *Societe genealogique canadienne francaise* in Montreal.

The visit planted the seed for establishing a genealogical library at LeFoyer and a society to maintain it. Leblond approached the LeFoyer board of directors seeking seed money and free use of the club's hall to launch the so-called genealogy club.

On March 16, 1977, at the LeFoyer Club's monthly dinner meeting, Lucille Lagasse, co-founder of the American Canadian Genealogical Society in Manchester, N.H. was the guest speaker. The topic of her address was genealogy and the excitement of tracing French Canadian ancestral roots.

Two months later, with significant interest expressed by members, LeFoyer held the first meeting of the genealogy club. In subsequent months, LeFoyer members and their "wives and friends" were invited to attend a genealogy club meeting and learn how to fill out a "pedigree chart."

Several more meetings were held in 1978 designed to recruit LeFoyer Club members and their families to join the genealogy club. Henri Leblond and the other club organizers set a January 25, 1978 deadline for new members to be considered "charter members." The cost to join the genealogy club is \$5.00 per year. That membership fee after January 25, 1978 remained at \$5.00 per year. The names of those charter members are commemorated on a plaque board in the AFGS library.

The meeting held on January 28, 1978 is considered the founding meeting of AFGS. There were 80 members of the genealogy club. Bylaws were adopted and officers elected. However, there was much discussion about the organization's name. It wasn't until September 1978 that the name American-French Genealogical Society was adopted and its logo unveiled. By this time the new society had 200 members from throughout New England and Canada.

To Trace Roots Of Habitants

The organizational meeting of a genealogical club specializing in French-Canadian genealogy will take place at 8 p.m. Wednesday in the Le Foyer, Pawtucket.

Plans announced by Henri Leblond, Le Foyer's public relations director and the organizer of the club, call for regular seminars on genealogy to help members trace their own ancestry, genealogical trips to Canada and France and the establishment of a library of French and Canadian genealogical materials.

The Rev. Clarence d'Entremont of Fairhaven, Mass., will be guest speaker at Wednesday's meeting.

Other speakers include Gerard Camire of Central Falls and Robert Quintin of Pawtucket.

Mr. Leblond is a member of the Societe genealogique canadienne-francaise of Montreal, the New England Historic and Genealogical Society of Boston and the Rhode Island Genealogical Society.

The meeting is open, without charge, to anyone interested in genealogy, particularly French-Canadian genealogy.

Newspaper clipping from 1978 promotes the organizational meeting of the French Canadian genealogy club at LeFoyer in Pawtucket, RI. The new club eventually became the American-French Genealogical Society.

The new AFGS also established a research service. The society charged a flat \$25.00 fee. The money would be refunded if the requestors family line could not be traced.

In April 1979 and April 1980, AFGS held two day genealogical conferences that featured numerous guest speakers. Admission was just \$2.00 for both days and a buffet lunch could be had for \$2.50!

AFGS enjoys an interesting history. Watch for an extensive feature story covering the founding and early years of the Society in the Spring issue of *Je Me Souviens*

OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

The board of directors recently elected the organization's officers. Their one year terms were effective in November 2012.

Normand T. Deragon was re-elected president. Deragon has served on the AFGS board of directors since 2000 and has been a member of the organization since 1979.

Rob Gumlaw was re-elected vice president. Gumlaw has served on the board of directors since 2005.

Dorothy F. Deragon was re-elected secretary. She has served on the board of directors since 2010.

Roger Beaudry was re-elected treasurer. He is a charter member of AFGS and served as president between 1994 and 2000.

Alice Riel was re-elected assistant treasurer. She has served on the board of directors for the past 12 years.

Re-elected to three year terms on the board of directors were .

Elected to their first three year term were Connie Lamoureux, Lorraine Laramee, and Louis McGowan. The board members were elected at the Society's annual meeting in October.

CABANE A SUCRE (SUGAR SHACK) SCHEDULED APRIL 13

Mark your calendar. AFGS is hosting its annual traditional French-Canadian Sugar Shack (Cabane à Sucre) on Saturday, April 13 at the Elks Lodge on Social Street in Woonsocket, R.I.

The Cabane a Sucre is the main fundraising event the Society hosts each spring. Proceeds benefit the AFGS Franco-American Heritage Center.

A buffet supper featuring fresh-cut garden salad, fresh-baked dinner rolls, Virginia baked ham, New England style baked beans, French pea soup, tourtiere, coffee, dessert,

Entertainment will be provided by *Fleurs de Lis*.

Tickets are \$25.00 per person and are available for purchase on line at www.afgs.org, at the library, or by calling Lorraine Laramee at (401) 724-2719 or email sugar-shack@afgs.org.

Seating is limited so tickets must be purchased in advance. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

JANUARY SPLIT THE POT WINNER

Congratulations to Mary Emond of Massachusetts, winner of the January Split the Pot drawing.

EMILE MARTINEAU HONORED FOR LIBRARY SERVICE



AFGS recently dedicated the library's periodicals section to the late Emile Martineau. Martineau served many years organizing and cataloging the periodicals. A plaque will be posted in the library honoring Emile's service. From left is AFGS librarian **Janice Burkhart**, Emile's widow **Laura Martineau**, and AFGS president **Normand T. Deragon**.

AFGS Online Library Update

The last AFGS newsletter announced that AFGS is planning a Members Only section on our website with access to selected library resources.

The AFGS Online Library Branch is still under construction and now in a testing phase. We are looking for AFGS members who would like to review the test site and give us your feedback.

Please contact wpommenville@afgs.org if you want to participate in the test phase and provide feedback.

Visit this link for the previous announcement: http://www.afgs.org/AFGnews_Nov-Dec-vol24-2012.pdf.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The following individuals have recently joined AFGS:

Janice Beall	Massachusetts
Jeannine Dionne	Massachusetts
Gay McCrae	Massachusetts
Robert Passano	Rhode Island
George Hersey	Massachusetts
Michael Van Dyke	Massachusetts
Marie Therese Arseneault	Massachusetts
Normand Boisvert	California
John Hebert	Vermont
Mary Murphy	Vermont
Bev. St Sauver	Oregon
Marcelle (Fleurette) Enright	Massachusetts
David E. Trottier	Massachusetts
Leo L. Languirand	Louisiana
Denis E. Dandeneau	Colorado
Yvonne Fitts	Florida
Joan Croteau	Florida
Richard G. Roy	New York
Susan Corey	Connecticut
Joan Axtell	Connecticut

AREA RADIO/TV STATIONS BROADCAST AFGS INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS

Find out if the Society is affected by inclement weather by tuning in to one of your local radio or television stations to check for cancellations.

AFGS participates in the storm and emergency cancellation notification program operated by the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association. If a winter storm forces the Society to close, a notice will be broadcast by 21 Rhode Island radio stations and six television stations. Many of these stations' signals cross into Massachusetts and Connecticut. If a radio station does not broadcast the cancellations, a listing will be posted on all broadcast outlet web sites and the AFGS web site.

NEW BEDFORD 'FETE DES ROIS' CELEBRATION



Margaux Berthiaume, of New Bedford was crowned queen and AFGS French Canadian Hall of Fame inductee **Roger Laliberte** was crowned king. The "crowning" ceremony was conducted by **New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell**.

The Fete des Rois celebration was held in New Bedford in January. The annual event was hosted by the ACA Court St. Rosaire chapter.

In France the celebration of the feast forms the basis of the traditional Epiphany celebration, formerly celebrated on January 6th, and now celebrated on the first Sunday after New Year's Day. The Epiphany cake is brought out and the accompanying ceremony begins.

The cake is divided into pieces and distributed to all attendees. Each person tastes his or her piece of cake, keeping an eye on the neighbor, until one of the assembled company proudly displays the "bean" and is proclaimed "King", or a "pea" to be proclaimed "Queen".

AFGS WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

The Society has announced its initial workshop schedule for 2013. All classes are offered free of charge and will be held at the AFGS Franco-American Heritage Center. All sessions begin at 9 a.m.

March 2 - **Internet Genealogy Searching: How to Improve Your Results.**

Presented by Bill Pommenville

March 9 - **Des Habitants aux Rois (From Settlers to Kings)** The workshop builds upon a previous iteration that explored settlement patterns in New France (Quebec). The workshop will examine sources of information that can be used to explore a number of individuals of noble birth, some of whom left descendants in present-day Canada and the United States, and document those potential gateway lineages.

Presented by Mike Potaski

March 16 - **Film room.** Presented by Fran Tivey

March 23 - **How to Research from Home for FREE.** Presented by Bill Pommenville

March 30 - **The Deerfield Massacre: Some of our English Ancestors.** Presented by Bill Beaudoin

April 6 - **How to Read the Repertoires and How to Use the AFGS Library.** Presented by Janice Burkhart

April 27 - **The King's Daughters in Your Family.** Presented by Sylvia Bartholomy

May 18 - **Genealogy and DNA.** Presented by Tom Allaire

May 25 - **Breaking Down Walls.** Presented by Rob Gumlaw

August 24 - **How to Read the Repertoires and How to Use the AFGS Library.** Presented by Janice Burkhart

September 7 - **Using Various Genealogy Software.** Presented by Bill Pommenville

September 21 - **Beginning Genealogy.** Presented by Dennis Boudreau

September 28 - **How to Research at Home for FREE.** Presented by Bill Pommenville

October 19 - **Film room.** Presented by Fran Tivey

October 26 - **Advanced Genealogy Research.** Presented by Dennis Boudreau

November 16 - **Internet Genealogy Searching: How to Improve Your Results.** By Bill Pommenville

November 23 - **Using Various Genealogy Software.** Presented by Bill Pommenville

LUCILLE CARON LAGASSE ACGS CO-FOUNDER DIES AT AGE 90

Lucille Caron Lagasse, co-founder of the American-Canadian Genealogical Society, in Manchester, NH, died Jan. 15, at her home in Goffstown, NH.



She was born in Manchester to Athanase and Anna (Ducasse) Caron, of French Canadian descent..

She was proud to be an aircraft mechanic during World War II.

She was a compassionate, loving wife and mother who worked, sang and danced well into her 80s.

Lucille was predeceased by her husband of 29 years, Armand J. Lagasse, in 1976, and is survived by two daughters, three sons, 12 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren

AFGS LENDING LIBRARY TO BE DISCONTINUED

The board of directors has decided to discontinue the Society's lending library due to lack of use. The lending library allowed members to borrow microfiche of various vital records. Microfiche is older technology and readers are become scarce.

AFGS will stop selling the lending library catalog immediately and will discontinue the lending library permanently on June 30, 2013.