



LETTER FROM THE MUSEUM

THE NUMBER OF VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM TRIPLES... IN JUST ONE YEAR



<i>Statistics</i>	2
<i>Press review</i>	2
<i>Inventory of Collections "In Situ"</i>	3
<i>Culture Days</i>	3
<i>Bringing Together Montreal's Religious Heritage Museums</i>	4
<i>Open Day at Saint Anne's Convent</i>	4
<i>Open Day - Continued</i>	5
<i>Changes to the Museum's Opening Times</i>	5

What a lovely fall for the Historical Center, which has become much more well-known among the population since its reopening. Once you have read this letter from the museum, you will know what has taken place during the months of August, September, and October 2009. You will learn about the inventory project for the collections "in situ" that has already been underway for a few weeks. You will also have an insight into the number of visitors to the museum in 2009. Firstly, you will see photographs of the *Quebec's Religious Houses Open Their Doors!* day.

We are always looking for regular or occasional volunteers (to help with special days or to welcome groups). Please don't hesitate to give us your name or pass our details to your friends. Visitors love to converse with the sisters as

they pass through the Historical Center.

Murielle Gagnon is still on maternity leave and is very well. Sara Juneau (colchssa@bellnet.ca) and Marjorie Deschamps (chssa@bellnet.ca) are available. Please call 1-514-637-4616 ext. 212 if you have any questions or would like to visit us.

On Display at the Museum in the Fall:

Two temporary exhibitions that venture off the beaten track and will amaze: an exhibition on the arts entitled "Helping Talented Sisters to Become Artists", which recently caused a frenzy among a group of 56 from Ontario, and an exhibition recalling 40 years of presence as missionaries in Cameroon, where you will find several photos and a wealth of souvenirs from Africa.

Still to be discovered or rediscovered, two permanent exhibitions opened their doors in 2008. Passing along the museum's long corridor, you will discover the turbulent life of Mother Marie-Anne through the historical tableaux painted by the Sisters of Saint Anne.

As for the large permanent exhibition, it recalls the community's history, the transition from a secular life to that of an apostolic religious, the missions, the tasks related to life within the community, and of course, the work of the Sisters of Saint Anne today.

Happy reading!

Marjorie Deschamps

The Statistics are More than Encouraging



Visitors flocked to the museum corridor during the “Open House.”

At the time of this writing, the Historical Center had welcomed 3409 visitors through its doors since January 2009. That's 3409 more people who now know about the history of the Sisters of Saint Anne, who know more about Esther Blondin, who have been able to understand the extent of the work of education of her congregation and who have been enraptured by Saint Anne's magnificent sanctuary.

By comparison, the museum had received 1003 visitors by the same date in 2008. We are proud to report that we have more than tripled the number of visitors. There are several reasons for this result. Firstly, the Montreal *Museums Day* on May 31 brought us 1000 visitors. We also welcomed several groups from different places. Finally, a brief look at the press review of the past few months shows that the Historical Center has appeared in written and television media on several occasions.

Marjorie Deschamps

Brief Press Review:

Summer and Fall of 2009

During the course of the summer and fall of 2009, the Historical Center appeared in articles or was mentioned in: *Le Devoir*, *Le Montréal Express*, *Le Messager de Lachine-Dorval* (on several occasions), *Le Messager La Salle*, *Le Journal de Montréal*, *Radio Ville-Marie*, *arrondissement.com*, *le Journal du Cameroun*, *le Messager de Verdun*, *Vox tv*, *le Journal le Bel Age*, *La Presse*, *TVA* (twice), and *CTV*.

Several visitors arrived at the Historical Center saying they had seen an article about it, which proves that media relations are increasing the SSAHC's renown.

You can contact the communications manager (Marjorie at 1-514-637-4616 ext. 212) if you would like to see the press articles and she will be happy to show you the press review.



Michèle Cézari unveils the sanctuary's secrets during the “Open House”.

The Museum Team

National Inventory of Religious Heritage « In Situ »

Thanks to support from the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine of Quebec (MCCCF) and the Société des musées québécois (SMQ), in collaboration with the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec (CPRQ), a national project for preserved religious artifacts "in situ" will start this year.



The aim of the project is to provide a list of religious artifacts, or artifacts belonging to religious and congregations, that are still in

their place of use and that have a significant value to national heritage, in order to build up knowledge about them and to promote their conservation and exploitation. For the Sisters of Saint Anne Historical Center, the project will initially concern the inventory of around 240 works and artifacts from the two main houses of the Sisters of Saint

Anne in Lachine, as well as that of the educational establishments: Maison mère, Saint Anne's Convent, Collège Sainte-Anne de Lachine, Collège Esther-Blondin, École Sainte-Anne and Queen of Angels Academy

The second stage will be to adapt data about specific artifacts from Maison mère, the Convent and Collège Sainte-Anne de Lachine that has already been computerized, with a view to transferring it to the ministry's database (60 artifacts and works).

Finally, there will be an exploratory inventory of all the residences of the Sisters of Saint Anne of Quebec with a view to determining the number of artifacts and works of interest and evaluating their content. The Historical Center has appointed a new museology technician, Ms. Lysandre Parent, who will join Ms. Sara Juneau and Sister Yolande Hivon on the project.

Sara Juneau

Culture Days 2009

The SSAHC took part in Culture Days for the first time on September 26 and 27 this year. The theme was "Biking to Lachine." We welcomed more than sixty visitors that weekend and the museum appeared in the official Culture Days program. Sincere thanks to the volunteers who came to run the venues: Julie Lévesque, Claudette Thibault, Myriam Gélinas and Michèle Cézari. With the open house at Collège Sainte-Anne taking place at the same time, they certainly had plenty to do!

The Culture Days also provided an opportunity to bring the "Lachine Hunting!" family rally to an end. This summer, the Historical Center joined forces with Lachine Museum, Pôle des rapides and the Lachine Fur Trade Museum, a National Historic Site of Canada, to offer a family activity for the inhabitants of Lachine. The rally involved visitors going into all the participating museums to respond to the questionnaire. There is a good chance that the experience will be repeated next summer to continue the cooperation between Lachine's cultural sites.

Marjorie Deschamps



Bringing Together Montreal's Religious Heritage Museums

In the spring, we took the initiative of joining forces with other religious heritage museums. A contest was organized with the aim of encouraging people to visit the seven museums that form the group. At the end of the contest, a winner was drawn at random. Ms. Monique Trudel won a prize package worth \$150 consisting of several publications, medallions, and a CD. When we telephoned the winner to give her the good news, she was delighted. "I don't usually win anything!" she told us.

If there are any places that you have not visited, we would strongly recommend that you take the time to go and visit to learn about other religious communities in Montreal. To find out about these museums, please come to see us at the Historical Center or telephone us at 1-514-637-4616 ext. 212.



Here's a reminder of the museums that are part of the group:

Maison de Mère d'Youville

Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal

Musée des Sœurs de Miséricorde

Marguerite-Bourgeoys Museum

Grand Seminary of Montreal

Émilie-Gamelin Center

Open House at Saint Anne's Convent: 360 Visitors!



Sister Germaine Comtois wearing period costume for the occasion

October 11 was a very special day at Saint Anne's Convent. As part of the international conference *Religious Houses: A Legacy*, the Historical Center team organized a heritage tour through the Convent and the museum. That afternoon, 360 people came to meet the Sisters of Saint Anne.

open house, more than 75% confirmed that they had heard about the open house from *La Presse* (the event was published in Saturday's vacation supplement, which has a readership of 675,000). On the evening of October 11, images of the Convent were shown on *La bonne nouvelle TVA*, on the French-speaking channel TVA, as well as on the English-speaking channel CTV.



Visitors in the community room with S. Margaret Cantwell

SSAHC received effective media coverage thanks to the use of public relations. When the first press release was sent out to the media, the program 'Salut-Bonjour' expressed an interest in using the unique surroundings of the Sanctuary of Saint Anne for its daily Mass: the weather forecast! Sister Christine Mailloux spoke naturally and with ease about the history of the Sisters of Saint Anne.

To welcome those 360 visitors, the SSAHC positioned volunteers at all the points of interest planned for the visit. Thirteen people were therefore involved: Sisters of Saint Anne, lay volunteers, and the Historical Center's regular staff. Several visitors confessed to having passed by Saint Anne's Convent every day for years without ever having dared to go inside.

Le Messenger de Lachine and *La Presse* also published articles about the event. Of the 360 visitors who took part in the

Open House at Saint Anne's Convent *Continued*

To brighten up the visit to the Convent, unpublished archival photos, artifacts and details on the restoration of certain rooms were exhibited in the convent's community room, where S. Margaret Cantwell and S. Nicole Trudel warmly welcomed the public.

Furthermore, for the themed exhibitions on the arts and on Cameroon, Sister Lise Grenier and Sister Jacqueline Arbec conversed with the visitors. Sister Germaine Comtois even wore period costume for the occasion!



S. Lise Grenier at the SSA Artists exhibition on October 11

Sister Claire Michaud and Ms. Michèle Cézari welcomed visitors to the sanctuary, while Sister Denise Sabourin spoke about the bedroom that recalls Mother Marie Anne's death. Finally, Sister Louise Beauchemin and Sister Françoise Dupuis managed the Historical Center with Ms. Claudette Thibault.

"Thank you for giving us this opportunity to get to know you and to show our appreciation"

The Results

What emerges right away is the great curiosity of the people of Montreal about religious communities. Every age group took part in the activity: families, young adults, adults, senior citizens. Several comments were left in the visitors' book, but the one that sums them up the best is: "Thank you for giving us this opportunity to get to know you and to show our appreciation."

Visitors demonstrated their gratitude throughout the afternoon, recalled memories, and could not stop saying just how magnificent the sanctuary is.

Finally, it goes without saying that Saint Anne's Convent and the Historical Center have taken a great step forward in terms of their fame within greater Montreal. There is hard evidence for this: during the days following the event, several visitors turned up to the museum saying that they had missed the "Open House"!

Marjorie Deschamps

Changes to Opening Hours from November

Due to reduced staffing levels for the low season, the times and days that the Historical Center will open will change beginning November 1. You will be able to visit the museum from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. The museum will be closed on weekends.

If you would like a guided visit, or for groups of six people or more, please reserve in advance at 1-514-637-4616 ext. 212.

Please also visit our website at www.ssacong.org/musee or sign up to our Facebook page.

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The Museum Team