

Le Foyer Newsletter

PO Box 2029 Pawtucket, RI 02861 401-728-8328 Lefoyer@lefoyer.org www.lefoyer.org

> **HALL RENTAL** 401-7250-8530

September-October 2008

SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER

Officers Installation **Dance & Banquet**

Sunday, October 5, 2008 Time: 1:30 Location: Le Fover Hall 151 Fountain St Pawtucket, RI 02860 Menu: Chicken Dinner Music & Dancing Les Joyeux Copains

Public & Friends Invited

Cost: \$12/member, \$15/non member Call in Rerservations: 401-728-8328 Email Reservations: Lefoyer@lefoyer.org

Project Sponsors

"Envove à Maison"

A Franco American Homecoming, is a cultural exchange project developed to celebrate the

400th anniversary of the foundation of Quebec City and

linking Quebec artists and Québec communities with northern New York and the states of Vermont and Rhode Island through

a series of performances, workshops, dances and crafts demonstrations on both sides of our border.













Le Foyer Salutes the following RI organizations for their contributing toward the success of 'Envoye a maison' in Rhode Island



Rhode Island State Council of the Arts



Le Foyer, Pawtucket



St. Ann Art & Cultural Center



Club Richelieu Woonsocket

Parlons Français Woonsocket



American French Genealogical Society



WNRI Radio Station 1380



Woonsocket's Museum Of Work & Culture

Le Foyer Clubs

Les Gais Chanteurs

Meets 7:30pm Mondays upstairs ballroom \$5/wk -

Hi-Lo Jack

Meets every Monday - 7:30 PM Meets downstairs hall call Bob Emery - 725-8530

Le Foyer Golf League

Meets weekly For details call 401 - 725-8530

Le Foyer Cribbage League Meets every Tuesday - 7:30 PM

Meets every Tuesday - 7:30 PM \$5/wk - Meets downstairs hall call Leo Lebeuf - 726-3724

Le Foyer Dart League

Meets every Thursday - 8 PM In house-no travel call Bob Goyette 724-0688 Henry Lopez 529-2035

Men's Chess Club

Meets weekly TBA

Every club is open for membership. The public is encouraged to participate.

The New England States

presented a monument to the City of Quebec on July 2,2008 commemorating Quebec's 400th Birthday and to give honor to the journey that was followed by many French Canadians who eventually settled in New England.



The Richelieu Club International of Woonsocket has commissioned a souvenir ornament as a keepsake to remember the event. The ornament has an impression of the 6 ft tall granite monument along with the inscription:

- ' QUEBEC 400 Don de Franco Americains
- NEW ENGLAND STATES Gift from the Franco Americans'

The souvenir ornament can be purchased at the Museum of Work & Culture, Woonsocket, RI.

Consignments

Do you make handmade items eg: wood sculptures, ceramics, or fashion pottery?

Would you like to be part of a Le Foyer display showcasing arts/crafts from our membership?

Do you build ships in bottles, paint on sea shells or make scrimshaw items? build clocks, weave baskets,crochet scarves or make blankets?

Do you make preserves, honey, maple syrup?

Do you have antiques items for sale, make wooden toys/games, or have old jewelry?

Then perhaps you would be interested in displaying your works of arts or sell on consignment?

We are still working out the details, however, if you are interested, send us an email or leave a message. 401-728-8328

Community Dance Lessons

Learn to Dance The Community Dances of Britainy

Sept 21 & Oct 19

Time: 2-4 pm Taught by Ray Price
Place: Le Foyer, 151 Fountain St. Pawt RI
Admissions: Donations of can goods

All proceeds of goods will be turned over to area food centers.

Notice of Cancelation: The Fez Noz Festival scheduled for September 26 had to be canceled for reasons beyond our control.

Reservations For Officers Installation Dance - Sunday, October 5, 1 - 5 PM	
Name:	Please make check out to: Le Foyer Mail to: Le Foyer, PO Box 2029, Pawtucket, RI 02861 Reservations must be received by Sept 29, 2008
# of Tickets: \$12/member \$15/non-members	
TOTAL: \$	

Dear Members,

It would be stating the obvious that this past year has been an especially unsettling time for our members trying to manage their finances. We are constantly reminded through the news of the sad economic conditions our families have been challenged with every day. Fortunately, during this time, Le Foyer's financial investments have been safely sustained under the prudent guidance of Mr. Robert Auclair of Randall Financial Group, LLC. So, it is with great confidence that I encourage all our members and friends, to take time from your busy schedules to attend the Randall Financial Group, LLC, 2nd Annual Wine Tasting fund raising event in support of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Come out on Sept 24 to personally talk of your concerns with Mr Auclair. You would be helping to raise food for the for the needy in our community and perhaps doing yourself a favor.

Roger R Bonin, Jr, President, Le Foyer

2nd Annual Wine Tasting

Please Join Us!

Date: September 24th, 2008 Time: 6:00 pm to 730 pm

Location: Our Offices at One Davol Square

The Atrium

Please RSVP by September 17th

Rob Auclair: rauclair@rfinancialgroup.com
Call at 401-228-0100
Looking forward to meeting you!

Guest Speaker: Charles B. Gaffney, VP Eaton Vance Mutual Funds. Mr. Gaffney, Director of Equity Research and energy analyst for Eaton Vance will be sharing his capital market outlook with us.

registered investment advisor

Rhode Island Community Food Bank: We believe in giving back to our local community. Last year along with your generous support, we were able to raise over \$2000 for the Make-a-Wish foundation. This year you can help us as we benefit the RI Community Food Bank. Please bring a donation of canned or boxed food. We will match all cash donations up to \$1000!

Guests are Encouraged. We appreciate working with you. Now more than ever you may know of someone who could benefit from sound financial advice. We would be pleased with the referral. If you know of someone who would enjoy the event, please invite them to join us.



The Max Malyuta Memorial Chess Tournament

October 18, 2008

The Rhode Island Chess Association sponsors an annual chess tournament in memory of Max Malyuta, a young Russian immigrant who was a beloved supporter and influential member of the RI youth chess community. Tragically, he passed away at the age of 25 due to meningitis.

All proceeds from the Max Malyuta Chess tournament are used to send the top RI boy and girl high school chess champions to compete in a national chess competition.

All donations are welcome.

If you would like to support chess in Rhode Island or honor Max Malyuta's memory, please send a check to:
RI Chess Association, P.O. Box 15444,

Event Organizer: The Rhode Island Chess Association *

Event Location: LeFoyer Banquet Facility.
151 Fountain St, Pawtucket, RI 02860

Event Date: Saturday, 10/18/2008

Time Control: 4SS, G/60

Rounds Time: Round 1 at 9:30 AM Prompt.

Byes: You play 4 rounds unless you get a 1/2 point bye

for Round 1.

Prize Info: \$600 b/60 Special Trophies will be presented

to winners in all 3 sections.

Inquiry: Phone: Frank DelBonis (401) 212-1335 **E-mail:** RhodelslandChess@yahoo.com **Requirement:** USCF membership required. **

Registration Information

Entry Fee: \$25 Donation by mail (suggested)

\$30 Donation at site.

Registration - Onsite: 9:00AM to 9:30AM.

Entries after 9:30 AM will receive 1/2-point bye or be paired if w/other late arrivals. Pre-registered must check in by 9:30.

Registration - Mail: Payable to: MAX MALYUTA MEMORIAL. **Mail Entry to:** RI Chess Association, P.O. Box 15444, Riverside, RI 02915.



rrench Canadian Fest

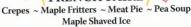
Saturday, September 6, 2008 ~ 3:00 - 8:30 pm Rotary Park ~ Kennedy Drive, Putnam

Josée Vachon 3:00-4:00 pm ~ "Les Joyeux Copains" 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Josée Vachon 3:00-4:00 pm ~ "Les Joyeux Copains" 5:00 - 7:00 pm (Traditional Canadian French Dancing) Comedy with The Sisters from the Daughters of the Holy Spirit 4:00 pm Strolling Accordion with Lenny Maynard

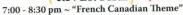


FRENCH FAIRE





RIVER FIRE



French Farmers' Market & Heritage Day

Saturday, September 13, 2008 River Island Park, Woonsocket, RI

- 9 am to 3 pm
- Dances of French Canada
- Dynamite Cook-Off (Details)
 - Arts & Crafts
 - Historical Tours
 - Tours aboard the Explorer
 - Puppets
 - Food

Music

10-12 by Les Joyeux Copains

Lefayer

151 Fountain St, Pawtucket RI 02861 401-725-8530 www.lefoyerri.com

Opening every Wednesday 4 pm - 9 pm For **Pasta Night** beginning **October 1, 2008**

Wednesday Pasta Night

Pasta Station Featuring:
Pasta (Fettuccini, Penne, Bow Tie & Spaghetti)
Clam, Marinara & Alfredo Sauce
Meatballs, Sausage, Seafood &
Assorted Fresh Vegetable

\$2 off



\$2 off

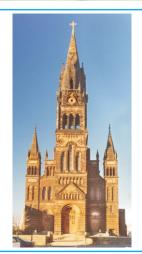
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Call: Business line - 401-769-6925



Saint Anthony of Padua Church 1359 Acushnet Ave., New Bedford, Ma 02746

On Sunday, October 26, 2008, at 3 pm, the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dr. David McKenzie will be joined by the Rhode Island College Chorus, Dr. Teresa Coffman, director, and four vocal soloists for a truly spectacular performance of Beethoven's Famous 9th Symphony at St. Anthony of Padua Church.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for students. A portion of the proceeds will go to benefit the full restoration of the 1912 Casavant Frères Organ in St. Anthony's. Tickets can be obtained on line at nbsymphony.org, by calling the NBSO ticket office (508.999.6276), at St. Anthony's Church before or after Masses, or at St. Anthony's Rectory, 1359 Acushnet Avenue, New Bedford (508.993.1691).

Outstanding Member

The following piece is the first in a series of articles outlining the lives of area French-Americans, many of them long-time members of the Le Foyer Club in Pawtucket, RI.

Profiles outlining the highlights of these residents' long lives, with details both heart-breaking and euphoric, will appear in print over the next few months. Names, places, events and timeframes referenced in each published profile were reported as they were related by the subjects themselves. No secondary sources were consulted.

Normand Prefontaine

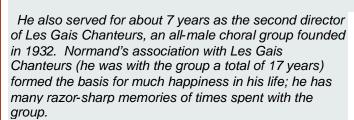
By Pamela J. Braman

Normand Prefontaine might have become a priest. Or he might had died sometime during the months in World War II when he served in Saipan, one of the Pacific Mariana Islands owned by the Japanese, then overtaken by the Allies in a bloody battle in 1944.

But today the 92-year old still resides in the town he was born – his beloved North Attleboro - in a one-bedroom apartment on Elm Terrace. To a visitor he seems intelligent, direct, soft-spoken, eager to help and very interested in what's going on around him. Despite wearing two hearing aids, he hears every question put to him, and is more than able to provide the answers, including names and dates! He reveals that he still drives and has a car to take him places if he needs it. And his days are full, thanks to friends and staff at the North Attleboro Council on Aging Senior Center, and to a large extended family.

The man who studied to become a priest, who currently serves as a Eucharistic deacon at Madonna Manor every weekend, ended up being married for 35 years to a "wonderful"

woman named Lucette. They became parents to one boy and two girls; that circle has since grown to include nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.



Normand Prefontaine was born on April 18, 1916, to Cyril and Emma Prefontaine of Leonard Street, North Attleboro. His father, from Woonsocket, was a butcher who sold meat to other distributors, and who heralded the novel idea of removing the gizzards from slaughtered birds before selling them at market. Normand's mother was a homemaker, and hailed from a large family, named Beaulac, in Pawtucket. Three sisters, Jean, Rita, and Lucille, rounded out the family.

From early on, music was an important part of his life — his father played violin, his mother, piano. Normand also played violin for a time. While he could not say where his French ancestors originally hailed from, Normand says he was very aware in his youth of his French background, especially regarding the music and language. There were many French relatives and friends in the neighborhood, and at Sacred Heart School, the primary school he and his future wife attended. Her family, named Dupuis, boasted 15 children, and maintained very strong ties with their cultural background. Normand said his mother-in-law

always insisted that French, not English, be spoken in her house.



Normand met his future wife, Lucette, while attending Sacred Heart School (Grades 1 – 8) on Church Street in North Attleboro. He remembers having a soft spot for her even back then, especially after he heard her sing. "She had a beautiful voice," he still recounts with awe. Later, after both had graduated from Sacred Heart, Normand remained friends with Lucette's family, and he went on to attend North Attleboro High School.

After much thought, Normand decided to enter the seminary at age 19. He entered La Salette Seminary in Enfield, New Hampshire, in 1935. Eighteen months

Outstanding Member

later, the director of the school called him in to the office to tell him his father was ill and the family needed his help. The next step was clear to everyone. "You must return home," Normand was told.

Normand did just that, returning home and finding a job almost immediately, working in Lucette's father's tennis racket factory. His income helped his family get by during his father's illness. And after reconnecting with Lucette, his feelings became quite clear to him. "When I came home, I knew who I wanted to be with in my life." But he said he had to wait four years for that to happen. Lucette was working and her income was needed to help support her large family.



Work and family kept everyone busy. Normand and Lucette married in 1941, living for a time in the second story of her parents' house. Things were going well, but soon World War II intervened in their lives. Worried about what was going on overseas, Normand felt a strong desire to enlist to help with the war effort, though by that time he had an infant at home and another baby on the way.

Because he had always wanted to be a Marine, Normand decided to sign up for that branch of the service. But he said he was later transferred to the Navy Seabees, without his consent. He thinks this happened because the duty was thought to be less dangerous. Or maybe not. After some months of training in California, Normand found himself working as a member of a construction battalion on the island of Saipan. One of his duties was to "clean" the beach, which he explained meant searching the sand for wires that might lead to hidden explosive devices.

Normand says he witnessed a devastating military attack while serving in Saipan – what appeared to him to be the loss of over 1,700 troops and/or civilians who became involved in a prolonged and ill-fated assault on the Japanese-owned island. He couldn't recall if it was U.S. or European troops involved, but said he saw many, many people "die right there in the water." Even if some

of the details remain unclear, Normand says he will never forget - or cease to be bothered by - the massacre he witnessed on the beach of Saipan.

Not long after the assault on the island was over, Normand said he was scheduled to return to the mainland. But something intervened, and he was bumped from his planned transport by another service member. Ironically, the six-member consort that did secure passage on the transport ended up being killed, after the ship went down at sea. "How's that for fate," says Normand.

After 28 months of service, Normand returned to the *U. S.* then home to North Attleboro, where he met his new infant son, Gerald, for the first time.

Now that life was nearly back to normal, Normand settled in with his young family, which grew to include three children, Annette, Gerald, and Claudette.

Normand attended Rhode Island School of Design for a time, but was forced to leave after he fell ill from chemical fumes related to wood finishes. Gifted with talented hands and a sharp mind, he kept employed working a variety of construction, woodworking, and tooland machine-related jobs during his lifetime. His jobs included years in construction and interior finish work, 18 1/2 years as a jewelry tookmaker at General Findings, 4 years at Creed Rosary, and 10 years as a carpenter at LaSalette Shrine.

His association with Les Gais Chanteurs, "The Happy Singers," began around 1945. A lifelong lover of music, Normand said he was thrilled to become involved with a group of talented singers who worked together to perform enjoyable renditions of traditional, sentimental, holiday, patriotic, and French songs. At various times, the all-male group would sing songs with lyrics in French, Latin, English or Greek.

Les Gais Chanteurs regularly performed seasonal programs and during select religious and cultural events in their hall in Pawtucket. But over the years, they also traveled to further locations, including New York and Canada, to give special performances. Normand relates happy memories of several of these trips, taken after he had become director. Closer to home, he has fond memories of going out dancing with Lucette, to events at the LeFoyer and at the Elks Hall in North Attleboro. "We had some wonderful times together. And I remember we celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary at the Le Foyer!" said Normand.

But he also relates one very sad and tragic memory from many decades ago, when Les Gais Chanteurs were midway through a performance in Pawtucket, and their choral director at the time, Herve Lemieux, was stricken and then died (out of view of the public.). Normand, second-in-charge at the time, was told to return to the

Outstanding Member

stage and lead the group through the remainder of the program, and to not let anyone know what had happened. "Going back to that performance, finishing it, and not letting on what had happened to Herve, was one of the toughest things I've ever had to do," says Normand.

Work, family, and music continued to be major forces in Normand and Lucette's life. The children grew and started to follow their own paths in life. The family had by this time moved into a home in a trailer park on East Washington Street. Normand says it was a large and comfortable unit, 12 feet by 60 feet.

But then fate intervened again, this time throwing the biggest challenge of all at the couple's feet. To everyone's disbelief, Lucette was diagnosed with bone cancer. When treatment failed to provide any hope, everyone realized they had no choice but to accept the inevitable.

Normand has memories of caring for his wife in their trailer home, after she had become very ill and frail. "If I had to leave her for a second, I sometimes had to tie her head to the back of the chair with a large elastic band, to make sure she wouldn't fall to the floor." But he said he had no second thoughts or regrets no matter how much care his wife needed during this time. "She was a nice lady. She deserved whatever help I could give her." Lucette died on February 3, 1976, at the age of 58. She is buried in a family plot at a cemetery in North Attleboro.

For a while after her death, Normand says he was forced to take a leave of absence from Les Gais Chanteurs. "When I tried to sing my voice wouldn't work, so I ended up not going to the group for about a year. What happened was - when I lost my wife, I lost my voice."

Normand likes where he presently lives, in a onebedroom unit at Elm Terrace, with a 12 x 20 kitchen/living area, and a 12 x 12 bedroom. He says the apartment he's had for several years now is comfortable and convenient. He doesn't own a cell phone or computer, because he doesn't consider these items to be "necessities." He says he has everything he needs in life, and feels lucky to be able to say that.

Each weekday, Normand goes to the Council on Aging Senior Center located alongside Elm Terrace. He socializes with other members in the morning, plays pool, and has lunch. In the afternoon, he joins a group that plays cards and cribbage. "We play whist, canasta and gin rummy. I've sort of taken charge of that part of it. Over the years, I've helped out at the center whenever I can. I enjoy doing it. Right now I've accumulated a total of maybe 116 hours of volunteer time. And we have a great time playing cards," he says proudly.



In the evening, Normand usually goes out for supper, then watches television at home. A widower for 32 years, he's not one to dwell on life's losses. But he does keep by the phone a notice highlighting the 30th anniversary of his wife's death.

While he still enjoys the prospect of each new day, Normand is well aware of the passage of time. By all appearances very fit for his age, he nevertheless says, "Life has caught up with me." In reminiscing about his happy times with Les Gais Chanteurs, Normand notes that since he became involved with the choral group, 99 members have passed away

Asked about his own longevity, Normand points to his older sisters who are 86 and 89. He thinks genetics might have something to do with a long life, but he's convinced that attitude matters too. "I try to follow two rules. Don't count on anything in life. And don't anticipate troubles." He also thinks that singers tend to show their age less. "I think singers stay young looking. They have a nice face, and if you think about it, they're always smiling when they sing."

Normand also credits his long-time interests in tennis and golf (yeah, Chimewa!) which helped him stay fit into his later years. And he expresses gratitude for the presence of the Senior Center in North Attleboro, where he says his present activities and extra projects keep him involved, happy, and feeling useful.

Friday evening, August 8, Normand attended the wedding and reception of his granddaughter Erin, one of his son's adopted children. He's excited to be able to witness the marriage, and he's enjoyed catching up with everyone and sharing a great meal at the reception afterwards. He even gave in to the temptation to take to the dancefloor, seizing the opportunity to dance with two of his younger female relatives. In all, he termed the event "a fantastic time."

"But I'm feeling it today," said Normand the day after. Normand has been a member of Le Foyer for over 70 years!

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