

# STE-AGATHE Historical Society

Annual Newsletters 2013



## Congrès Mondial Acadien Parade Float

Front l-r: Lorraine Pelletier Marston, Tina Gendreau, Linda Cyr, Dona Saucier, Annette Daigle,  
Don Levesque, Romeo Parent, Dick Marston.

Center: Lille Benbow, Emma Gendreau, Abby Gendreau.

Back: Chris Benbow, Lois Muller, Joseph Benbow, Stephen Benbow, Paul Muller, Mélanie-Ève Bourque.

## STE-AGATHE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EST. MARCH 23, 1978

P.O. Box 237, 534 Main Street, St. Agatha, ME 04772

### Preservation Center

#### Open:

mid June to mid September

1:00 to 4:00 daily, Tues. – Sun.

Email: [Staghs77@yahoo.com](mailto:Staghs77@yahoo.com)

Web Site:

[www.steagathehistoricalsociety.com](http://www.steagathehistoricalsociety.com)

### Board of Directors

President : *Terry Ouellette*

Vice President : *Gloria Gervais*

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*Alan Michaud*

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*Lise Sirois*

*Diane Castonguay*

*Gary Boucher*

### Trail Guides :

*Donna Boucher*

*Sylvia Belanger*

*Dr. Paul Buck*

TOTAL STAHS LIFETIME

MEMBERSHIP- 388

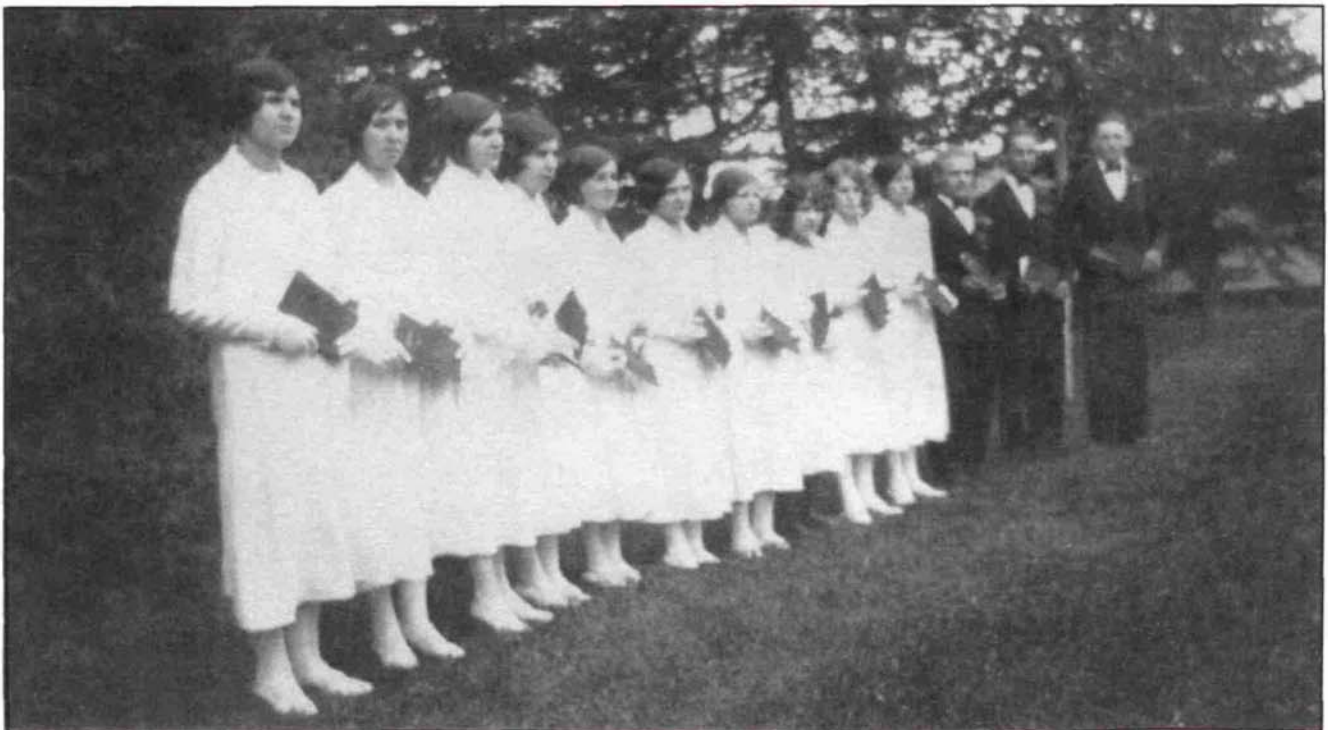
REGISTERED VISITORS FOR 2013 - 710

LOGGED VOLUNTEER HOURS -480

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON  
by  
Jacqueline Chamberland Blesso

Willie Cyr used to drink his cocktail of vanilla extract poured into a bottle of Pepsi while hiding between my parents' general store and one of our warehouses at Gérard B. Chamberland's in Ste-Agathe, Maine. *Le bonhomme Willie*, as we called him, had been gassed in France during World War I, "The war to end all wars." Deemed unfit to manage his own affairs, as he would spend his entire pension on alcohol at the beginning of the month, Armand Lagassé had stepped up to serve as Willie's legal guardian. Since Willie was not permitted to buy alcoholic beverages, he started buying bottles of extract, preserved in 35% alcohol. Once my father, Gérard, realized this, my mother, Eva, hid the vanilla under the counter instructing us to tell Willie that "we did not have any to sell." Meanwhile, we would write up his purchases in the account book, and Armand would reimburse us at the end of each month. This was also the arrangement with the other stores in town.

Armand Lagassé and my father, Gérard Chamberland, were among the three men and ten women who graduated, in 1930, from Notre Dame de la Sagesse High School of Ste-Agathe, the public school administered in conjunction with a private Catholic boarding school at the convent of the Daughters of Wisdom. They were born in 1912 – Gerard on May 3 and Armand on July 4. Of short stature with light curly hair, Armand had been a polio victim when he was young. An orthopedic brace on one leg caused him to limp. Gérard attended a one-room schoolhouse in *les concessions* where he grew up, and Armand attended school at the convent. They met for the first time during the two-week catechism class in preparation for their first communion and confirmation, and subsequently became friends in high school.



1930 graduating class – Gérard, first from right, Armand, third.

When we were young, Armand would come to the store in the evening and stop to talk with us on the front porch of our house, which was attached to the store. He would regale us with stories of their mischief in high school, such as spitting their chewing-tobacco juice into the inkwells. He graduated from Aroostook State Normal School in Presque Isle in 1935. Armand taught school in Ste-Agathe and Sinclair, and in 1943 was elected to serve in the Maine House of Representatives. He was President of the Ste-Agathe Board of Selectmen in 1944-45. On June 26, 1946, he married Léonie Marin. She served as Town Clerk and Town Treasurer in 1946-47. He was also the sales representative for Birds Eye Foods, a subsidiary of General Foods, Inc.

Several years earlier, when Armand was contemplating becoming Willie's guardian, his father, Eloi, had warned him against doing so, saying: "*c'est un vieux chétif cet homme-là.*" Armand had laughed at his father's labeling of Willie as a wicked old man, as Armand was not afraid of Willie.



Armand Lagassé



Armand with sons Paul (left) and Jean (right)

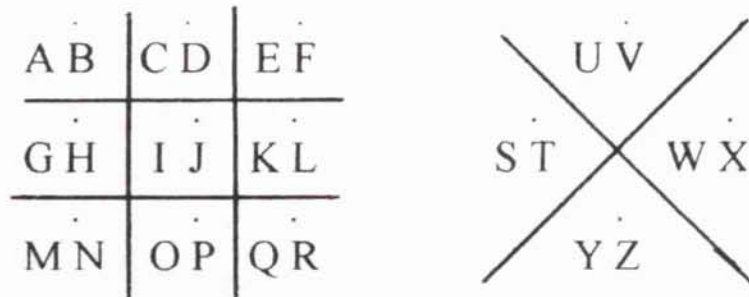


Armand and Leonie's wedding, 1946

Willie was born in Ste-Agathe on April 11, 1895. He was inducted into the army on May 27, 1918, and served until March 4, 1919. He claimed that he married the “widow” of a missing French soldier who had presumably been killed during the war. After the armistice, however, the soldier returned home. Willie left and never (re)married. The details of his exposure to gas were murky; and as is the case with many returning veterans, it may have been compounded by some level of what we now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Willie re-inserted himself into our village in the middle of the 1950s. Little is known of his intervening years. He limped and leaned on a cane, and almost always wore a grey-zipped bomber jacket over dark clothing, a safari hat and dark glasses due to an eye operation. Of medium build and round-bellied, he would come to our store, two doors up the road from where he lived (in the second-floor apartment he rented from Armand), accompanied by his little white mongrel dog.

Willie was pleased when my mother would invite him into our living room to play the piano. While he rarely smiled, he could be quite garrulous. Whenever I waited on him at the store, he would often linger to talk – sometimes about the war. He told me how he had served as a translator in France, and claimed to have invented a military code based on the “tic-tac-toe” grid and an “X”.



Two letters are placed in each position of the grid. Each one of the letters in the second position within each grid has a dot on top. To write a B, all that was needed was to create a left angle with a dot inside:  $\cdot \lrcorner$ , and a C and D (with a dot over the D) would be drawn  $\lrcorner \cdot$ , with or without the dot, etc. So,  $\lrcorner$ ,  $\cdot \lrcorner$  and  $\lrcorner \cdot$  represent A, B and C. The letters S to Z would be written the same way around the open positions of the “X”.

On August 31, 1958, my parents and younger siblings were in Québec on their annual pilgrimage to Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré. Days after beginning my senior year, I considered myself too grown-up for such a family outing! Having picked some lettuce and shallots from the garden to make a sour-cream salad, I cooked chicken in the rotisserie and invited my two best friends, Pat and Rachel Michaud (who, coincidentally, were Armand’s nieces) to join me for a noonday dinner. We had had just finished our meal, when a gunshot tore into the tranquility of that sleepy Sunday afternoon.

Corinne Albert, our visibly shaken neighbor, arrived at our house.

“Call the police!” Corinne exclaimed. We had a phone because of the store; but like many households at that time, the Alberts did not. She hesitated for a moment when she saw that the Michaud sisters were visiting, but blurted out:

“Willie Cyr has shot Armand Lagassé!”

I called Deputy Sheriff, Donat Daigle. He advised us to call the State Police, who would be coming from Caribou or Presque Isle, 40 to 50 miles south. In the meantime, a small crowd had assembled at the scene of the crime. Armand, 46, lay stretched out on the veranda in a pool of his own blood having been shot in the head at close range. Willie, 63, was pacing back and forth in front of Armand, guarding his victim like a sentry with Armand’s single-barrel 20-gauge shotgun over his shoulder.

We soon learned that Willie had taken the gun from Armand’s garage which was between the two houses. The Alsime and Églène Lagassé family (no relation to Armand) lived downstairs from Willie in the first-floor apartment on the left. Armand had an adjoining office on the right, but lived with his family in his house next door. When Willie tried to shoot him, 68-year-old Alsime ran from the premises and jumped a fence in the back of the house. Églène fled from the bathroom just before a shot penetrated the room.

Rev. Valmont Gilbert, the young vicar of the parish, arrived and gave Armand the last rites. Father Gilbert then engaged Willie in conversation. Taking advantage of this distraction, Réginald Tardif, a young man from the parish, snuck up behind Willie and took the gun away from him. The State Police later arrived and placed Willie under arrest. At Armand’s funeral, the church was packed with people from the parish in sympathy with Léonie and her two sons, Jean 10 and Paul 5.

There had never been a homicide in Ste-Agathe.

On December 18, 1958, William Cyr pleaded “not guilty” in front of the judge of the Superior Court in Houlton. A doctor from the Augusta State Hospital testified that “Cyr did not know the difference between right and wrong at the time of commission and he was criminally insane.” The jury brought in a verdict of not guilty for reason of insanity. The judge sent him to the asylum in Augusta. William Clovis Cyr died there on January 24, 1961, at the age of 65. His death certificate recites that he suffered from schizophrenic reaction and paranoia.

Léonie Lagassé passed away on September 10, 2012, at the age of 93.

*In war, there are no unwounded soldiers.* Jose Narosky

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Thank you Maude, T.O. Francine and Renée.



# Ste. Agathe Historical Society

534 MAIN STREET

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## Acquisitions from January 1 – December 1, 2013

Arthur Albert Jr.	Life Time Certificate for Mr. Mrs. Arthur Albert Sr.
Estate of Jean Paul Michaud	Photo Albums, Army Documents, High School Diploma
Paul & Shirley Chasse	Collection of Sears and JC Penny Christmas Catalogs
Roberta Daigle Guerrette	Glee Club Sheet Music
Jeanne Bosse Cyr	Centennial Daughters of Wisdom Calendar from Canada
Ross & Judy Paradis	Centennial Mugs, Centennial Shirts Long Lake Summerfest Shirts
Purchased By SAHS Memorial Fund	Podium, Rolling Cart, Model of Canoe, Wooden Storage Box, Blanket Rack, Suit Holder, Podium, Wooden Sculpture, Bride Dress and Form
Arlene Voisine	Black Rosary,
Roger Plourde	Wooden Crutches, Lamp
Stan Albert	Artificial Boston Ferns, Glass Case, Two Books, Four Picture Frames, Glass Chandelier, Woolen Mittens, Basket, Baby Bottles, Jar
Denis & Phyllis Levesque	Various Tools, Picture Frames, Books, Woolen Blanket, Pillow Cases, Baptismal Bib, Books, Linens, Spray Bottle
Florence Rose Martin	Rosette Quilt
Therese Chasse Albert	Pans, Tin Cans, Tin Containing Buttons
Julie Plourde Cyr	Wooden Mortar, Singer Shirt Marker
Leonette St. Onge	Buck Saws, Deer Head
Dr. Thomas & Jackie Chasse	The Potato by Larry Zuckerman
Beurmond & Hermance Banville	Vest Pocket Dictionary, Spud, Handle, Pliers
Vicky Corriveau	Pacific Stars and Stripes, UM Centennial Edition
Gerard Morin	Wooden Potato Truck, Platter
Clint & Rita Babin	1978 Zenith Stereo System
Roger Morneault	2012 & 2013 Pioneer Yearbooks
Lucien Ayotte	Lucien Ayotte Potato Grower Cap
John & Sylvia Bouchard	U.S. Marine Uniform
Keith & Bern Lord	Walking Wheel, Shalers Family Scale, 2 Henderson Foot Warmers, Latin/English Dictionary, Fishing Creel
Roland Grivois	Three Missals
LaBrie Farms	MPG Cap and Maine Potatoes Cap



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Ken & Arlene Lerman

Movie Camera, WW II Poster, Wooden Phone Box,  
Electric Sewing Machine, Argus Flash, Camera, Film

In Memory of Alphy Levesque

Radio, Kettle, and Tools

St. Joseph Parish Mars Hill, ME

Religious Items

Shirleen Rossignol Moynihan

Weaved Blanket

Eugene & Jackie Michaud

Pumpkin Cookie Jar

Nicole Bellefleur

Basket Weaving Supplies, Books, Paint

World Acadian Congress Grant

Back Strap Loom Kit, Carding Combs

Jeanette Guerette Albert

Wooden Cabinet, Tub, Table, Handle, Peavey, Ice Breaker, Organ, Stool,  
Rocking Chair, Door, Hutch, Metal Scrape

Mona Chasse Gagne

Le Livre de Piété de la Jeune Fille

Rita Plourde

Two Blankets

Guy Michaud

Evangeline Sheet Music, Booklet of French Songs

Bob & Gloria Sirois

Three VHS Tapes

Gisele M. Chamberland

Une Catalogne

Alfreda Hebert Chamberland

Baptismal Set

Jeanne Gagnon Chamberland

Assorted Spice Tins

Estate of Walter Fournier

Catéchisme En Images, S. Rosaire

Michael Cyr

Horse Drawn Scraper

Bill & Helen Melvin

Collection of Teaching Materials from PACE/FABRIC

Gerard & Diane Castonguay

Chair, Skiis

Aline Marquis

Marquis Family Photo, Statue of Holy Family

Jacques & Maggie Blais

Night Stand

Jason & Jennifer Derosier Daigle

Ladies Auxiliary & St. Agatha Volunteer Fire Dept. Uniforms

Marcel Chartier

U.S. Army Medals, Glass Pitcher

Michael & Doreen Daigle

Grass Hook

Gary & Donna LaPointe Boucher

1953 Fort Devens, MA Army Photo with Roger Chamberland

Clarence & Helen Ayotte

Two Sewing Machines, Wooden Drawers, Assorted Tools, Trunk

Cliff Albert

Wooden Twin Bed Head Board & Frame

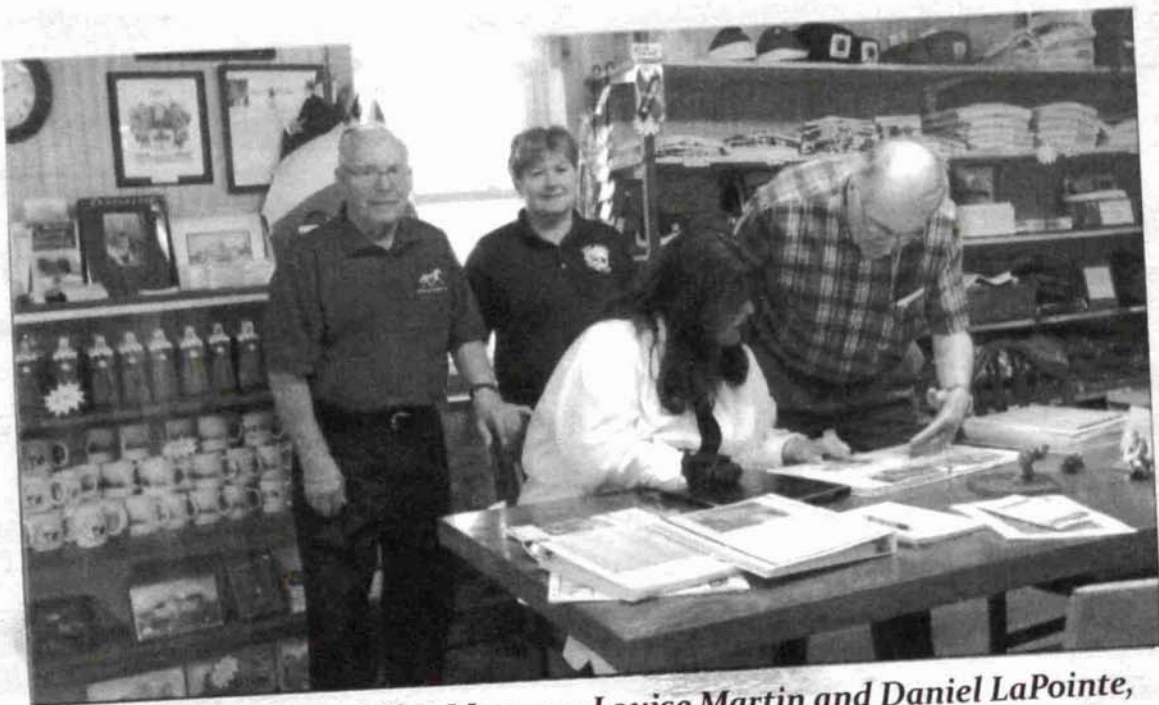
Daughters of Wisdom

Framed Prints

# Activities at the Preservation Center - 2013



*Sr. Aurelie Michaud looking at the Michaud Albums*

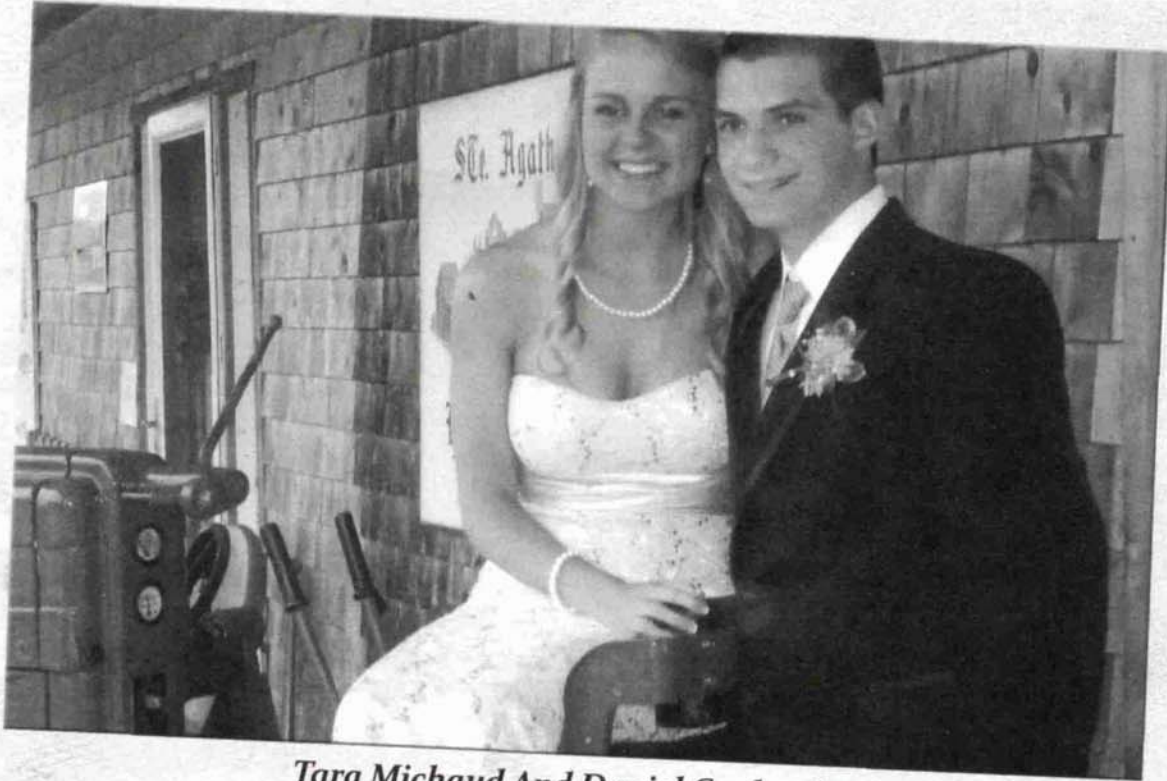


*Annual Visit from Office Manager Louise Martin and Daniel LaPointe,  
President of the Maine Acadian Heritage Council.  
Back: Gerald Dubois and Trail Guide Donna Boucher*



# Prom Night - May 25, 2013

Photo Opportunities @ the Preservation Center



*Tara Michaud And Daniel Coulombe*



*Dorothy Rossignol, Mathew Boucher and Elizabeth Guimond*



# Ste. Agathe Historical Society

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## Annual Meeting July 15, 2013



*Front Row: Secretary Carole Plourde, Vice President Gloria Gervais,  
President Terry Ouellette, Treasurer Philip Morin.  
Board Members: Harold Chamberland, Alan Michaud, Judy Chamberland,  
Diane Castonguay, Jackie Michaud, Gary Boucher.  
Not in photo: Lise Sirois and Gaylen Thibeault*

# Activities at the Preservation Center - 2013



## **TEXTILE THURSDAY - JULY**

*Sitting: Lise Sirois - Standing L-R: Carole Plourde, Ann Grunthaler, Geraldine "Nune" Michaud, Jeannine Daigle, Bernadette Thibeault, Rella Daigle, Jackie Daigle, Riley Lausier*



## **WISDOM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

*Front: Alyssa Dumond*

*Back: Nathan Boynton, Daniel Coulombe, Kate Lavoie an Mrs. Connie Cloutier*



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## 2013 Thank You To Our Trail Guides & Volunteers



**SEPTEMBER 8, 2013  
APPRECIATION BRUNCH**

***Front: Trail Guide Donna Boucher, Claudette Boucher, Trail Guide Sylvia Belanger.  
Standing: Gloria Gervais, Joyce Plourde, Doris Staples, Julie Cyr,  
Marie Mae Chamberland, Trail Guide Dr. Paul Buck and Doreen Daigle  
Not in photo: Florine Michaud and Youth Guide Holly Dionne.***

## KEEPSAKES

The following items can be ordered from the Ste-Agathe Historical Society:

Voici the Valley Culture way - CD & Booklet.....	\$ 5.00
*Evangeline, The Novel by Richard F. Mullins.....	\$14.95 (Paperback).....\$24.95 (Hardcover)
Land In Between by Beatrice Craig.....	\$30.00
Destination Madawaska by J.R.T. Theriault.....	\$19.95
Fusion of the Acadian and Canadian Races In Madawaska-English Translation by J. Blesso.....	\$5.00
Les Filles de la Sagesse Ste-Agathe, Maine 1904 - 2004.....	\$30.00
Les Belles Histoire du Couvent de Ste-Agathe.....	\$25.00
Le Centenaire de St. Agatha Maine.....	\$25.00
History of Ste. Agathe Parish 1889 - 1989.....	\$10.00
Ste-Agathe Cemetery Records 1889 - 1989.....	\$10.00
Ste-Agathe Cemetery Records Part II 1990 - 2006.....	\$10.00
Marriages of Ste-Agathe 1889 - 1989.....	\$10.00
St. John Valley Souvenir Postcard Book.....	\$12.00
Acadian Flags (3' x 5').....	\$29.95
Heritage Sites of the St. John Valley by Louise M. Martin.....	\$ 5.00
Year 2014 Calendars.....	\$10.00
*New Items	

To place an order by mail, circle each item that you would like, specifying how many. Please include \$4.95 for the first item and \$1.00 for each additional item to cover mailing costs, and mail to:

**The Ste-Agathe Historical Society**  
**PO Box 237**  
**St. Agatha, Maine 04772**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STE-AGATHE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

**November 30, 2012 - November 30, 2013**

*In Memory of Mrs. Priscilla Lerman, by Lise Sirois.*

*In Memory of Mr. Rock Chamberland, by Marie Mae Chamberland.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Yvette Ayotte Plourde, by Bob & Pat Bourgoin, Juliette M. Cyr.*

*In Memory of Mr. Norman Cyr, by Lise Sirois.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Mary Anne Berce Carrier, by Daniel & Roberta LaBrie.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Carol Lizotte Derosier, by Terry M. Ouellette, Jackie Daigle & Janice Lausier, James & Patricia Morin, Clifford & Theresa Guerrette.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Ida P. Morin, (Mrs. Leo James Morin), by Philip Morin.*

*In Memory of Mr. Valier Chamberland, by Ken & Arlene Lerman, Clifford & Theresa Guerrette.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Doris Nadeau, by Clifford Guerrette.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Velma Thibeault, by Ken & Arlene Lerman, Lise Sirois, Gerard & Diane Castonguay. Harold Chamberland.*

*In Memory of Mr. Camille Morin, by Patricia J. Morin, Gerard Morin, Philip Morin, Stan Albert, Juliette M. Cyr, Roger & Bernice Martin, Mary Costa, Terry M. Ouellette, Roberta Guerrette, Phyllis F. Morin, Bob & Pat Bourgoin, James & Rita Chamberland, James & Patricia Morin, Lorraine Zimmerman, Donna Levesque, Doris Staples, Don & Rachel Daigle, Carl & Theresa Michaud, Florine Michaud, Angela Houghton, Jack & Linda Caron, Pauline V. Plourde, Carole Plourde, Francis & Jacqueline Blesso, Francis & Claudia Morin, Joel & Claudine Voisine, Elaine M. Michaud, Donna & Gary Boucher, Candide & Harold Sedlik.*

*In Memory of Mr. Louis & Mrs. Lorette LaBrie, by Danny & Roberta LaBrie.*

*In Memory of Mr. Xavier & Mrs. Ethel Daigle Chasse, by Stan Albert.*

*In Memory of Mr. Maurice E. Cyr, by Harold & Candide Sedlik.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Rose Poulin, by Donna M. Levesque.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Candide Desrosiers, by Terry M. Ouellette, Marie E. Bosse.*

*In Memory of Sister Annette Picard, D.W., by Philip Morin, Gloria Gervais.*

*In Memory of Mr. William & Mrs. Julie Dominique Rau Pelletier, by Philip Morin.*

*In Memory of Mr. William Michel Pelletier, by Philip Morin.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Corinne Chamberland Caron, by Gloria Gervais, Rita Plourde, Gayle Pelletier, Claudia, & Francis Morin.*

*In Memory of Mr. Gerald J. "Gerry" Ouellette, by Clifford & Theresa Guerrette.*



# Ste. Agathe Historical Society

534 MAIN STREET

P.O. BOX 237

ST. AGATHA, MAINE 04772

December 28, 2013

Dear Members and Friends of the Ste-Agathe Historical Society,

It has been a busy year for us at the Preservation Center. We are most fortunate to have dedicated Trail Guides, made possible in part by the Maine Acadian Heritage Council, devoted board members and volunteers to oversee the various activities that took place during the 2013 season. It started with having the 2013 Junior/Senior Prom participants asking to use the agricultural display for a photo background since their theme was "Meet Me At The Barn." Needless to say the cold winter air had not yet left the building on this damp and rainy May Saturday evening but the young prom goers were all about showing their fine attire and taking pictures. Many of the grown-ups accompanying them were in awe of the artifact collection and promised to come back during warmer weather. And they did.

In June we hosted a stew and ploy luncheon for a group from the Canadian-American Center of the University of Maine at Orono. Trail Guides and extra volunteers made this possible. The Orono group, in search of their Acadian roots, were delighted with the luncheon but the claim to fame was the "Pudding Chômeur." We must remember to have plenty of that on hand for the upcoming WAC, the "Pudding Chômeur" and a generous supply of water bottles. During the warm summer months, we had a steady stream of visitors - some for the first time and some for a return visit. Many of our people with a St. Agatha connection come back home and the Center seems to be the new gathering place.

Textile Thursdays was again a favored event for the participants involved. It's most interesting to see how talented this group is and they plan to have WAC visitors involved in their cultural crafts next year. 2014 will prove to be a most exciting event for our Acadian heritage and culture. It'll be a never before event in our region. When they say all these visitors will be in our area, they proclaim big numbers totally unfamiliar to our idea of a Summerfest. It's more than a Summerfest - the celebrations will begin on August 8th and last until August 24th. Plan to add water to the stew! So far we know that St. Agatha will have The Acadian Mass, The Firemen BBQ, and Lighted Boat Parade on Sunday - August 10th. Please check on the [www.cma2014.com](http://www.cma2014.com) for a complete listing of the family gatherings and much more information.

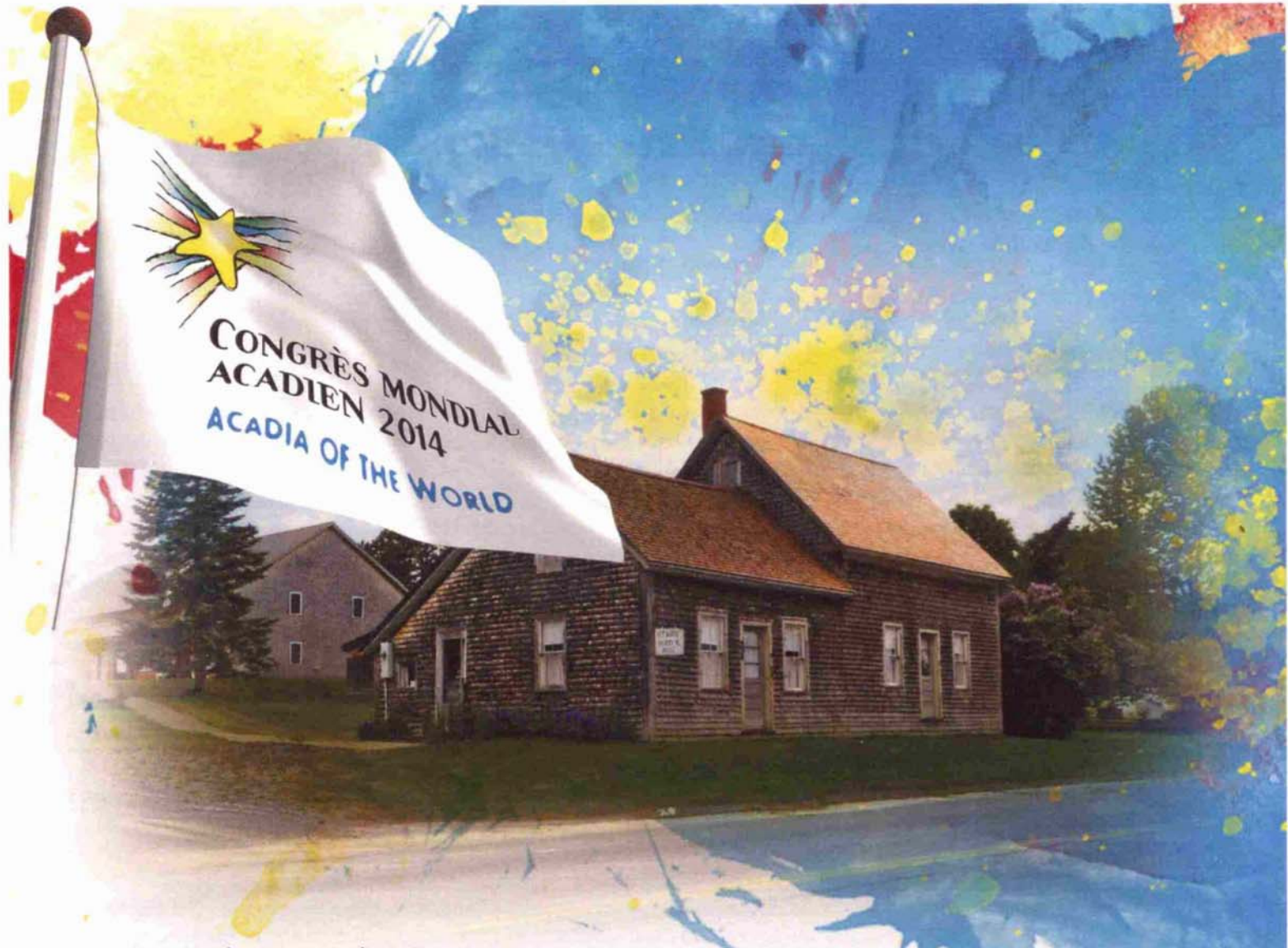
We look forward to seeing you at the Preservation Center and having The Taste of History Cook Book available.

Sincerely,

New Lifetime Members - Ann Lausier Pelletier - Roland & Cindy Paradis

Annual Members - Donald & Anna Mae Raymond, Sally Gagnon

Mailing Expenses of the Annual Newsletter - Donation from United Insurance, Fort Kent, ME



Ste-Agathe Historical Society  
534 Main Street  
P.O. Box 237  
St. Agatha ME 04772

Change Service Requested

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