

# The Echo

May 2003

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## Riddle me this!



“Who cares what the answers are?” the Riddler once asked. “Isn’t it the questions that really matter?”

As the chorus prepares to compete at the upcoming International Conventional in Montreal, there are many questions to ask ourselves.

Am I ready for Montreal? What did I do today to prepare? Am I giving my all at rehearsal? Am I doing my musical homework? Are my body and mind what I want them to be on stage in Montreal?

Well, you won’t find those answers, here, my friends. Only more questions! Question such as...

- [How do you keep Mark Klostermeyer from hurting you?](#)
- [Which Harmonizer comes from New Delhi High School?](#)
- [Where is the Little Chorus that Could?](#)
- [How can a history make history?](#)
- [What happened on our first trip to international?](#)
- [What is the mysterious probe?](#)
- [When is a successful Spring Tonic not a success?](#)
- [How can six choruses have the same birthday party?](#)
- [What event requires a large bath towel, soap, water bottle, alarm clock, and a pillow?](#)
- [What is there to do in Montreal?, and](#)
- [What cross words does your editor have in store?](#)

So put on your thinking caps, delve in the Echo, and maybe you can come up with some answers....

And here’s one more for you: When does a sound become a sight? Why, when it’s the Echo’s new look and logo! The new logo and masthead are designed to visually represent the fading sound of an echo. Tricky, huh? We hope you like them, the more streamlined look we’ve adopted, and the many blue hyperlinks to other pages, people’s emails, and useful webpages. Remember, if it’s blue, you can probably click on it!



## The mysterious...P.R.O.B.E.!

by Jerry Kindred

PROBE is an acronym for Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors. This is a voluntary association, affiliated with SPEBSQSA, but self-supporting. PROBE provides information and support for chapter and district officials concerned with external (public relations) and internal (chapter newsletters and bulletins) communication. PROBE was the brainchild of Dee Paris, a member of the DC chapter with whom many Harmonizers are acquainted. Dee along with our own Wilbur Sparks played a pivotal role in the evolution of the separate PR and Bulletin Editors into a single organization in the late 1950s. In 1961 Wilbur published "Better Bulletins for Better Chapters," a manual for bulletin editors still in use today. Wilbur later served a two-year term as PROBE president in 1963 and 1964.

Today PROBE conducts contests for Bulletin Editor of the Year and Public Relations Officer of the year. It also assists the districts in conducting their annual Bulletin Editor and Public Relations Officer contests. PROBE also publishes the *Probemoter*, a quarterly newsletter for the PROBE community, and it provides instructors for district Chapter Officer Training Schools.

Since its inception PROBE has seen many changes in the technology of PR and publication. In the beginning individual editors use mimeograph machines and some laboriously undertook right margin justifying (try that with an old fashioned typewriter). Now we have the magic of word pro-



cessing and the advent of page maker software and photo scanners. As a result today's bulletins are much more professional and with the advent of optical scanners, much more visually appealing.

As technology is advancing, it is presenting new challenges for the PROBE leadership. What to do, for instance, about online publications of which our Echo is a cutting edge example. There are now 60 chapters with on line versions of their newsletters, including 9 in our Mid-Atlantic District.

Can these be judged for contests alongside paper bulletins, or do we need new guidelines? This is a question that will be at the top of our agenda when we hold our annual conference in Montreal during the International convention.

There's no disputing that singing is our passion, but remember the (to borrow a phrase from Dr. Johnson) "harmless drudges" who record our memorable moments for present amusement and entertainment and preserve our heritage for the curious future. That is part of the mission of PROBE.

You can learn more about PROBE at its website:

<http://www.harmonize.com/probe/>



## When in Montreal...

by Mark Klostermeyer

Things to remember in Montreal according to your Chorus Manager ...

### Drink plenty of water

Now is the time to start hydrating your vocal cords in preparation for International. Get your body conditioned to an increased fluid intake. The music team can speak about the benefits of water as far as singing; I am more concerned about the “what goes in must come out principal”. Downing a gallon of water the morning of contest most likely will result in the need for the closest rest stop just before curtain. With 120 of your fellow singers in the same condition this can cause serious logistical problems.

### Be Mindful Of The Up Front Help

The musical and convention team is going to make things as easy as possible for you to concentrate on your job on the risers. It is important for you to trust the plan that you have worked so hard to perfect. The only people in front of the chorus will be Richard & Terry, Larry Silva working with SP, Chris Buechler – Chairman of the Convention Committee and myself. Because rehearsal time is so limited, it is traditional for all questions from the risers to be referred through the chorus manager so they can be answered for the benefit of all members.

### No Coaching

As the contest time gets closer some individuals have a tendency to offer advice to their fellow performers. Although intended as well meaning and helpful it often comes across as irritating and trivial to the rest of the chorus. Last minute fixes can't be remembered once the curtain goes up. Trust the plan and the musical team to spot and make any enhancements that are needed before hitting the stage.

### K12, telling it like it is....



### Watch your Voice

The International Contest is a wonderful opportunity to see and hear some of the best performers in the Society. But be careful as you cheer on your favorites; especially all the Chapter quartets as they go for the Gold. Make sure you have 100% of your voice left for Saturday. Sore hands from applause is acceptable, sore throats from screaming is not. This rule also applies to late night wood shedding sessions. Saturday night after all the contest sessions are over you are encouraged to stay up until the “Wee Small Hours”. However until then, rest your voice and body so you will be ready for Saturday afternoon.

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## You Will NOT See Dallas Perform

Because of our draw, we will not appear on stage until late in the second half of the contest. The bad part is we will miss seeing almost all of the other choruses including Dallas. The good news is we will have ample time



in the morning to prepare. You will be able to eat lunch and change into your uniform and makeup before we head over to the convention center. After our performance it is very important to follow instructions for the photo session so we can get back to our seats as quickly as possible for the last couple choruses, the swan song package of Northbrook and the announcement of winners.

## And the Winner Is – SIT DOWN!

As you know the Society only awards the top 5 choruses. The Harmonizers have been honored in 13 contests with medals. It is tradition within the chorus that we cheer on our fellow barbershoppers as the results are given, and we go crazy and celebrate only after our name is announced. Make a point of going out of your way to congratulate all the participants from the

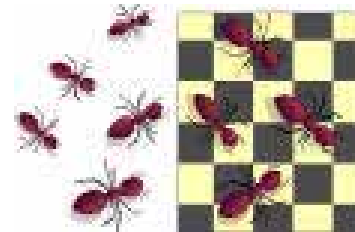
other chapters you were allowed to share the stage with. Be mindful of making negative comments about the contest, fellow competitors, judges, or life in general at any time in public. Remember, you are a member of the Alexandria Harmonizers, respected throughout the Society as the classiest Chapter in Barbershop.

## Have A Great Time

To get you ready for the Chorus Contest there will be a number of rehearsals, performances, and special events. Arrive at all events on time and stay flexible as schedules change. Be prepared to “hurry up and wait” as the group is moved from place to place, and pay special attention to instructions being given from up front. But the most important rule during the Convention is to have fun. Only a small percentage of the Society membership earns the right to get on the International Stage. Savor the experience. Ask anyone who has been there before and they will tell you it’s the shortest 6 minutes of your life - so enjoy it!



Congratulations to our own Jeremy Richardson, who just completed presenting and defending his doctoral thesis in Physics, which concerned the innovative use of EM waves to detect planetary systems around distant stars. Welcome back, Dr. Richardson!



Put July 19, the Harmonizer Family Picnic, on your calendar now! We have reserved a shelter at Burke Lake Park (in Fairfax County at 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station), which has a lot to offer.....fishing, golfing, softball..... Stay tuned!



## Spring Tonic Successes...and Challenges!

by Ken Rub

As the producer of the 2003 Spring Tonic, I want to thank each and every one of you who offered up your time, talents, and voices to make this another successful Tonic. There was no guarantee that this Tonic would maintain the same high standards our patrons are used to – and lots of people were asking if we would make it through the Director transition, and perform at the same level without an Artistic Director. We proved that we were up to the challenge – and even to exceed expectations.

Some of the successes I want to highlight include:

- I was thrilled by the singing I heard throughout the weekend. With the baffles down, the sound filled the auditorium – thank you for bearing with us and performing without a curtain. Just think – if we can sound that good after less than three months under Richard’s tutelage, imagine what lies ahead!
- Thank you for supporting our quartets. I got feedback that most of you looked attentive when quartets were sharing the stage with us, and supported them with your energy and enthusiasm. This is an area where some of us could improve – some glazed looks were observed. When you are sharing the stage with a quartet, give them your full attention, and enjoy the moment. A natural smile on your face will make a big impact to the audience.
- This show had only one costume change, which made it easier for everyone to be at their designated place on time. This makes the chorus and stage managers’ jobs much easier. Thank you for making your call times on both rehearsals and performances.



Of course, there were areas where we could see improvement. Generally, ticket sales were disappointing, and were impacted by several external factors. (war, economy) However, I have overheard comments by several chapter members that they do not sell tickets to our shows, that they shouldn’t have to. Some mention that we haven’t added enough songs to our repertoire to keep inviting their friends back, some were concerned with ticket prices, and others were worried that the lack of Stage Presence on more songs would disappoint.

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Unfortunately, one only needs to look at our past several shows to see that these comments do have some merit. **However, the chorus can not meet its short-term or long-term goals without a steady source of revenue.** Our biggest revenue source comes from our Spring Tonic and Fall Show. Let's take a look at the numbers.

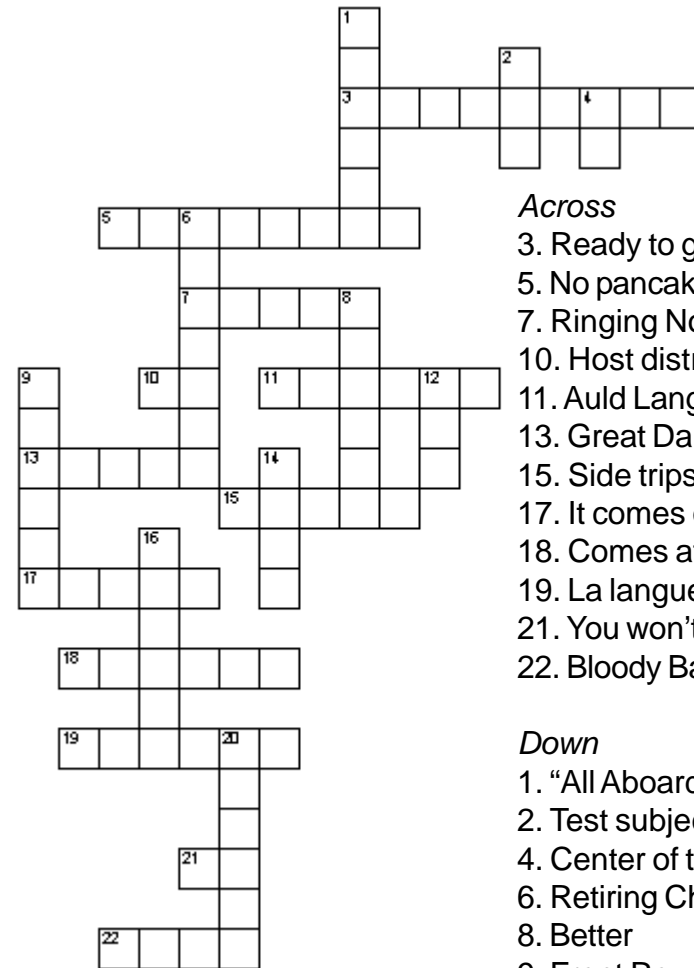
For the 2003 Spring Tonic, we were budgeted to make \$23,000 in net income. We were only able to make a little less than \$12,000 – considerably under budget. It is plain to me that if we have several shows with similar income, we will not be able to afford the things that are key to our future success. Things like coaches, new arrangements, costumes. Quite honestly, we will not be able to afford to retain our new Director if we can't find new ways to either sell our shows, or find other revenue sources.

The good news is – there is any easy way increase our revenues! After the chorus meets the expense for each program (like marketing, cost of the Concert Hall, ect.) each ticket sold is profit. If we could have sold an additional 200 tickets, the Tonic's profitability would have increased to over \$16,000 – still under budget, but a large improvement. That is less than two additional tickets per member. This is why it is important for everyone to sell tickets.

I welcome feedback on how to make our shows more marketable, of new zany ways to get increased exposure for the chorus, or how to convince our own members that we put on a worthy program. I also welcome your comments if you think we should break the mold, and find new revenue sources. For example, I am going to investigate a two-show format (only have a Saturday matinee and evening performance) which will cut our expenses, and let us sing to a fairly full house. I can be reached at [krub1@cavtel.net](mailto:krub1@cavtel.net).

## A Conventional Crossword!

by The Puzzlemaker



### Across

- 3. Ready to go!
- 5. No pancakes needed
- 7. Ringing Nord's
- 10. Host district
- 11. Auld Lang Syne
- 13. Great Danes
- 15. Side trips
- 17. It comes on sheets
- 18. Comes after O
- 19. La langue du jour
- 21. You won't see them
- 22. Bloody Barbershoppers

### Down

- 1. "All Aboard"
- 2. Test subject
- 4. Center of things
- 6. Retiring Champ
- 8. Better
- 9. Front Row men
- 12. Quite a show
- 14. Best
- 16. Good
- 20. You can sing with them



## Advancing by Retreat

by Tommy Morris

The very first International competition retreat was held in 1992 and was for International New Orleans 1992, where our contest package was “Church Bells are Ringing for Mary and The Church Medley (Get Me To The Church on Time/For Me and My Gal). That first retreat was held at the Shepherds College in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

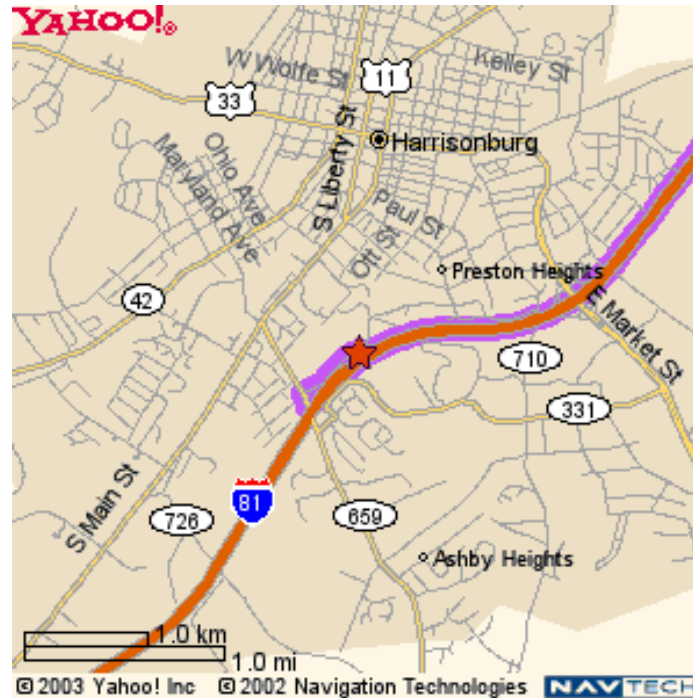
Since that first retreat, we have been to Western Maryland College in Westminster, Maryland and now to James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia (see map).

Why do we have the retreat? It is a time of concentrated effort on the contest package. We concentrate on every aspect of the package and I do mean everything.

We invite special coach friends to come and be our leader for the weekend giving us more professional coaching to sharpen our singing and sp.

What to bring? Large bath towel, soap, water bottle, alarm clock, pillow (the college provides one, but you may prefer your own!), music, tape recorders, extra tapes and any uniform pieces that are selected to wear that weekend.

How is the retreat conducted? Saturday morning is registration from 8am



to 8:45am. There is usually coffee, juice, pastries for those who do not have a chance to eat breakfast. At 9:00am the retreat is officially started. During this time we have lots of time on risers fine tuning our package. Then we might break into small groups sections, quads and half-chorus. A magnificent schedule is worked out by Terry Reynolds and team that allows our directors to move from one of these groups to another, rather than moving the groups. Keeping the chorus stationary instead of moving it around is a great improvement.

We have plenty of breaks so you don't get too tired on the risers, limbering up time.

Meals include lunch and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday.

We do try to have some fun on Saturday night. A party if you will. This year we are looking at different ideas for that party (off campus).

Sunday tends to be an emotional time as we can hear and see what the final product is going to be.

At every retreat we introduce to the chorus the new class for International. This year it will be the new guys who joined the chorus or it is their first time at International: THE CLASS OF 2003.



## An Historic Award!

by Scipio Garling

The Alexandria Chapter has always enjoyed making history. Now, we've gotten an awarding for doing so!

Last month, the Alexandria Chapter was honored for its monumental publication *Breathless Moments*, a history of our first 50 years. The Alexandria History Society, which supports efforts to preserve Alexandria's history, recognized us for creating such a wonderful volume.

On hand to accept for the Chapter were Gary Smith, principal editor of *Breathless Moments*, current Chapter president Gary Bibens, and Ibbiane Sparks, widow of Wilbur Sparks, an invaluable member of its editing team and former Barbershop Society Historian. Presenting the award with her characteristic grace and humor was State Senator Tycer, a long time fan of the Harmonizers.

Our own **Bachelor Party** (Scipio Garling, Greg Tepe, Ken Rub, Terry Reynolds) was on hand to sing the National Anthem and to perform a few numbers for the overly kind audience at the ceremony.

For those who have never read *Breathless Moments*, we have a treat on the next page. In keeping with the Echo's theme this month of going to International Competition, we have excerpted for our moment in history the passage of *Breathless Moments* that describes our first trip to compete at International.

If you are a newer member and have never read *Breathless Moments*, don't waste a moment... start reading this award-winning book today! You can order it on-line by using the blue link in the first paragraph or by going to the Products menu on our homepage.





## Our First International!

as excerpted from our award-winning Chapter history, *Breathless Moments*, by Gary Smith et al.

Winning their first District Championship in 1977 gave Alexandria's barbershoppers their first chance to experience the excitement of International Chorus competition. In many ways the experience would change their barbershop activities, their barbershop attitudes, and their barbershop ambitions. It would mean a more intensive search for ways to improve Harmonizer musicianship. It would mean great emphasis by the chapter's leadership on the administrative necessities of planning for International Contests. It would mean financial problems as Alexandria's annual budgets increased by tens of thousands of dollars. During the months between Alexandria's win at Ocean City in October 1977, and the International Convention in Cincinnati, in July 1978 the logistics of getting 104 Harmonizers (and their wives, children, and friends) to the site of the contests were planned and completed.

...

It may very well be that the chorus peaked on stage. The applause was another kind of music for the Harmonizers. There was a great hand from the audience and a terrific one from our supporters who would regard our chorus as close to number one no matter what the judges might decide. We had sung our best and our best was good enough to give us Fourth Place. To be Fourth on the first try for International honors was no small accomplishment.

...

The Cincinnati adventure ended with a victory celebration in the Harmonizer Hospitality Room and a post-victory celebration in the Harmonizer Hideaway. The celebration, it was said, was not over and done with until five o'clock the next morning!

## Au Revoir!



**John Flynn**

**Patrick Lockhart**

Last month we said goodbye to John Flynn and Patrick Lockhart. John Flynn was a recent President of the Chapter and its webmaster for several years. Patrick was a graduate of the Society's Young Men in Harmony program. We wish them luck in their barbershop futures! If you would like to send them a well-wishing email, just click on the blue names above.



## Member Profile: Jay Carter!

by Jay Carter

Jay Carter (b. 3/19/47) in Los Angeles, California, to Jay B. Carter and Mary Louise Cross Carter. My father's mother was a farmer's wife, but she played the piano quite competently. My grandmother loved to play the piano. Of course, I always loved to listen to her play Beethoven or Chopin, as she did into her ninth decade. That was one of my privileges as the first of her scores of grandchildren. Dad tried the violin as a boy and blew the bugle in the Boy Scouts and Army. Later I tormented him with blasts from his bugle out of the closet. For a short time.

My mother, as a child, was enrolled in dancing classes to make her the next Shirley Temple. She tried to pass her wonderful skills and boundless enthusiasm for tap, ballet and other dance forms to her eight offspring and had great success with the girls and none with the boys. I can demonstrate for you. Better yet, just ask my quadrant leader.

My father's career in constructing power plants and electrical distribution systems took us to many states and countries. In Portsmouth, Ohio, I attended Mound Street Elementary School on weekdays and First Presbyterian Church on Sundays and sang hymns with gusto. The children were dismissed to Sunday school during the service to Sunday school. The minister's son and I always managed to be first out of that setting so that we could conduct our weekly fist fight. In time my father permutated this into a regulated card of boxing matches. These were produced at home for me and my classmates on special occasions, such as my birthday. We even had to wear gloves. This must be where I lost my sense of rhythm.

In time, the Carter family was posted in Bangkok, Taipei, and New Delhi. I visited many dam sites, airfields, jungles and ancient wonders. I heard the harmonies of many cultures and the music of many languages, and learned to thoroughly enjoy the intriguing differences and the common



joys they represent.

American pop music and European classics on reel to reel tapes and LP's were our usual at home entertainment because we didn't have TV, and with nothing on the car radio, the family singalong was the perennial back seat favorite.

When I graduated from American International

School of New Delhi, I began higher education at Palomar College San Diego County, California. I continued at San Jose State College. There my musical appreciation course was provided by a roommate who could and did sing all the harmonies in all the Simon and Garfunkel tunes, both vocal and instrumental, flawlessly and incessantly. After graduating I worked as a clerk, microfilm machinist and journalist in northern California. Later I migrated to northern Virginia, continuing in journalistic functions, technical writing, teaching delinquent adolescents in foster care settings and laboring in home rehabilitation and house painting.

In 1985 I was given tickets to a barbershop show by a gentleman whose

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wife took dancing lessons from my mother. My mother had drafted me and retired vaudevillian named Bill Kinsey, (and late Harmonizer) to lead singalongs at nursing homes after her ladies presented their tap dance shows.

My friend's gift of show tickets introduced my ears to a quartet called Vaudeville, the Alexandria Harmonizers Chorus and to auditorily generated goosebumps. I didn't think I could get in this exalted group, but I attended meetings, received learning tapes and encouragement and promptly left to Michigan for a job assignment.

In Midland, Michigan the nearest chapter was too distant and I was too busy to visit. Instead, I sang with my tapes for a year, returned to Virginia and to the freshly crowned first time International Champion Alexandria Harmonizers.

I became a member in February 1987 and first sang on stage with our chapter in joint concert with the Vocal Majority at Constitution Hall that April. That year was also highlighted by our performing the swan song package in Hartford, Connecticut, as well as our first and most elaborate role in the Kennedy Center Honors.

A great Harmonizer I admired named Henry Brown confided at chapter meeting that he was too frail and afraid to sing at the Kennedy Center. I told him I needed him to clue me in and keep me in tune. If he would sing the show I would stay right beside him and not let him fall. Henry consented to this deal and special memories came with a special performance. We both successfully performed our parts that weekend and were seen in our chorus singing for CBS viewers nationwide. When it was over I hummed to myself, "when you're a jet, you're a jet all the way, from your first cigarette to your last dying day." To me, it's just another way to say, It's great to be a Harmonizer.

## Our Hosts in Montreal!

by Scipio Garling

The wacky gentlemen pictured here are some of our hosts for the International Convention in Montreal. Don't they look like fun? They are your host chapter, the Island City Chorus (a.k.a., the Little Chorus That Could), and you can learn all about them at their website, <http://www.nedistrict.org/montreal/>.

So kind are they, and the Northeast District of which they are part, that they have set up a special website for barbershoppers like us coming to the convention at <http://www.nedistrict.org/montreal/international/>.



It's full of information you deserve if you are going to Montreal; a list of things to bring, the lowdown on the restaurants and sites to see in the city, info on the convention center and the convention itself, and important advisory on travel, customs, and the like.

Dash to your web browser and peruse these useful sites so you have plenty of time to prepare for Montreal!



## Happy Birthday, SPEBSQSA!

*In April, we celebrated the Society's 65th birthday...with five other local chapters!*



Arlington



Prince William



Centreville



Mount Vernon

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# The Echo

The monthly chapter newsletter of the Alexandria Harmonizers, May 2003, page 13



Fairfax



Sweets for the sweet



Yum!



Party!



## Bienvenue au Montreal

by Sarah Eckman

I've lived in Montreal on and off for a total of five years. I go on and on about how it's the greatest city in the world and EVERYONE should visit. So needless to say, when my dad (Bob Eckman) asked me to write a little guide for all the barbershoppers heading North for the competition, I said "No Problem!" Turns out this was a lot harder than I thought, for two very different reasons.

First of all, I'm leaving Montreal next week for a great job in the States. It makes me nostalgic just to think of writing about my favorite places for you to see. And more importantly, we're just coming out of a 7-month winter, which saw 6 inches of snow on April 6<sup>th</sup>. To think of things you can do in July is so hard, just to imagine Montreal without snow, impossible!!

But summer will eventually arrive, and Montreal is the best place to spend it. The excitement about being outdoors is so contagious, the entire population can be found in the many parks, whether biking, rollerblading, throwing a Frisbee, or just lounging in the sun. We Montrealers cherish every precious day of summer, we flock outside to sit at cafes for long lunches, we leave work early to go Rollerblading along the Lachine canal, and after that we sit at outdoor terraces for dinner and beer! Montreal has even learned to put all the best Festivals into the summer months, giving every opportunity to be outdoors.

All this al fresco activity has helped to give Montreal a reputation as the Paris of North America. As the second largest French-speaking city in the world, it certainly feels more European than anything else.

So here it is all in a whirlwind, the local's view on the things you absolutely must see, eat, and do while you're here.

### General Information

All the signs are in French, and most people here speak French, but don't let it intimidate you. Everyone understands English, especially the younger crowd, and honestly they'd rather switch to English than hear you try to speak bad French. I speak from experience! If you are trying to ask directions and you encounter a stubborn person, don't give up; chances are the next person along will help you out. Do try to pronounce the important street names in French; St. Denis (duh-knee), and St. Laurent (laur-ah) are the most commonly mispronounced. Basically forget all the precise pronunciations you've learned to sing with... Quebecois French is a language meant to run together with unfinished endings.

The easiest way to get around Montreal is by public transport. Driving is a hassle, you **will** get a parking ticket, and the endless jokes about the potholes in Quebec will never stop. If you do decide to drive, there is **no** right turn on a red light on the Island of Montreal. Pedestrians always have the right of way, and don't hesitate to exercise it! Everything you really want to see is within a 5-minute walk of a metro station anyway. This link has a great explanation of the system and a good map, although the prices are a bit out of date.

<http://www.moremontreal.com/eguide/general/around.html>

There should be a special Jazz-fest tourist pass available for the Metro, which would be good if you plan to use it every day. Otherwise, tickets cost \$2.25 each, and you can buy 6 for \$9.50. Unfortunately, the Metro ticket kiosks are the one place where you'll find no English spoken. To buy one ticket, just say "une fois" (un as in tune, fwaah – means one time) or resort to holding up one finger!

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The metric system is used in Quebec; kilometers for distance, litres for gasoline, and temperatures are in Celcius.  $0^{\circ}\text{C}=32^{\circ}\text{F}$  and an easy conversion trick is to double the number and add 26. This only works above freezing, but lucky for you it's July! You should be all right with a light jacket for evenings, and don't forget comfy walking shoes.

Canadian money is much more colorful than American, the bills are all different colors, and we have a dollar coin (called a loonie because of the bird on the back) and the two-toned two dollar coin (called the toonie just because it rhymes and is equal to two loonies, it actually has a polar bear on the back).

Montreal is a great place to be a street musician, loonies, and toonies add up so much faster than quarters do in the States! By the way, the street buskers (performance artists) are unionized in Montreal, especially in the Old Port - they have all passed auditions and paid quite a bit for their permits. Ste. Catherine Street is unregulated for busking; many of the younger groups you'll see are probably McGill students trying to make their rent. It's actually possible on a good day!

## Places to Go

There are a few common areas that tourists hear about; Olympic Stadium, Biodome, Botanical Gardens, Biosphere, Casino, Habitat for Expo 67, Museum of Fine Arts, Notre-Dame Basilica, smoked meat sandwiches, and the Old Port. It's true, you could experience this top ten list and feel satisfied...until you spoke with a local.

**Olympic Stadium**, accessed by Green Line Metro at Pie-IX (Pee-nuff), site of the 1976 Summer Games, consists of an 80,000-seat stadium, North America's best botanical garden and the awesome Biodome—a 4,000-animal, 5,000-plant re-creation of four ecosystems, the most sensational being

a steamy rainforest filled with neon-bright, noisy birds and golden monkeys rumbling in the jungle.

The truth is Montrealers hate the Olympic Stadium, known as the Big-O...the retracting roof didn't even work once, it's not downtown, it wasted a lot of tax money, and face it, it's pretty ugly. You've heard of the demise of the Montreal Expos, well, they play at the Big-O, and average attendance is around 3,000. It's not that we don't like baseball...we'd love to keep the Expos. It goes back to the cherishing summer theme...who wants to go sit inside a clammy 80,000-seat stadium where the roof might collapse at any moment! When the Canadian Football League moved the Montreal Allouettes from the Big-O to the downtown McGill Stadium, they sold out the entire season. Every single game – and won the Grey Cup (like the Superbowl). If only they could secure a downtown stadium for the Expos...

The **Biodome** and **Botanical Gardens** are very well presented, and are a decent day activity. I recommend the penguins and the rainforest at the Biodome. The Gardens are a lot of walking, but the special exhibits can be a quick visit.

The **Biosphere** is located on Ile-Ste.Helene, although you can see it from the Old Port quite clearly. It's the largest sphere structure in the world, and was built for the World Expo in 1967. It's also close to the **Casino** de Montreal, in fact you can walk, bike, or rollerblade between these sites and La Ronde amusement park. For information on getting to Ile-Ste. Helene, follow this link.

<http://www.moremontreal.com/eguide/iles/iles.html>

I recommend admiring the Biosphere from afar, there's not that much to see or do inside, the Biodome is more thorough in that respect. The Casino is always a fun trip, it's open 24 hours a day, and often has live Cabaret-style shows as well.

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**Habitat 67** is an apartment complex across the Lachine Canal in the **Old Port** of Montreal. It was built for the Expo, the architect designed each apartment to have windows on at least three sides. Residents say it's starting to fall apart...

I recommend everything in the Old Port. For the more active, join the crowds of locals as they rollerblade and bike along the Lachine Canal. The Canal was just reopened to pleasure boats last year after all the locks were restored. You can follow the bike path West towards Atwater Market, or East past Habitat to the Casino and the Formula One racetrack. All the locals know the best rollerblading is a few weeks before the Grand Prix, when they've repaved the track and it's still open to the public. You'll have no trouble finding rental locations by the water. For more definitive Old Port information, read this page

<http://www.toutmontreal.com/english/eguide/oldmontreal/oldmontreal.html>

If you want the gourmet low-down on poutine, check out this site:

<http://www.montrealfood.com/poutine.html>

- 2. Jazz-Fest.** You can't miss it, there are tons of free outdoor concerts during the day and at night. Jazz central is the plaza at Place des Arts (metro stop on Green line).
- 3. Eat other authentic Montreal foods:** either a smoked meat sandwich, or fresh Montreal-style bagels. Schwartz's Deli (3895 boulevard Saint-Laurent, 514-842-4813)—Montreal's "smoked meat" capital—a mandatory stop for visitors. Massive sandwiches on crusty rye served with garlicky pickles nearly as large. St. Viateur and Fairmont Streets in the Plateau district have competing bagel shops. I recommend Fairmont Bagels, for its proximity to the \*very\* nice shops on Laurier Street (Between St. Laurent and west to Cote-Ste. Catherine).

- 4. Take a walk in Mont-Royal Park,** on weekends you can relive your hippie days at the base of the statue, corner of Park Ave. and Duluth. Dance to the tam-tams and buy lots of things you don't need. The lookout over the city can be reached by the path at the Statue, or from the stairs at the top of Peel St. (ugh!)
- 5. Wander up St. Laurent Street.** There are many trendy shops all the way North to Mont-Royal. Head East on Mont-Royal, past second hand shops to St. Denis Street. Head South again on St. Denis Street. There are tons of fun shops and great restaurants. I recommend everything! For the best expensive meal in Montreal, check out Toque! (3842 rue Saint-Denis, 514-499-2084). Try the pureed broccoli and hazelnuts topped with poached salmon.
- 6. More good shopping** is found on Ste. Catherine Street, from La Baie (Hudson Bay Company) on rue Union (McGill Metro) all the way West to Guy (Guy-Concordia Metro). For more upscale shops check out De La Montagne and rue Peel between Sherbrooke and Ste. Catherine, where you'll find Holt Renfrew, etc. Stay away from the "underground malls" they are touristy and just not worth your time...stay outside, it's summertime!

I think that's it! Here are some more handy web links. Enjoy and have a great time...

**A great guide to Montreal, answers all your questions**

<http://www.toutmontreal.com/english/eguide/>

"Must see" places to visit

<http://www.moremontreal.com/eguide/general/mustsee.html>

ATMs, French-English Dictionary, bar closing hours and much more

<http://www.moremontreal.com/eguide/general/mustknow.html>