



A Word from the President

Action Saint-François is ten years old this year! We would like to celebrate this event! If you have ideas of how we might do this, let us know !

*Pierre Dansereau
President*

Our organization looks towards the future with optimism and we are working to put in place new projects and enlarge our scope of activities.

To know more about the future of Action Saint-François and to do your share, it is important to attend the Annual General Meeting. This meeting allows us to present an up-

date on our actions; as well as to get suggestions and ideas from you, the members. We hope for lots of participation on April 27 at the Chaudronnée in Sherbrooke. Don't forget that the business meeting is preceded by two special guests. For more information see the announcement of the AGM on page 2.

Our coordinator, Robert Léo Gendron brings you his spring invitation on page 2. Another magnificent season of clean up operations



is in view! And to give you a taste for it, Alana shares her memories of last year.

Also in this journal you will find an article by Robert Léo summarizing the film *La loi de l'eau* (The Water Law), the latest work of Robert Monderie, the assistant director of Richard Desjardins film *l'Erreur boréale* (The Boreal Error). Finally our coordinator talks about *L'Union paysanne* (United Farming), this new association of farmers and citizens devoted to the valorization and the protection of our countryside.

A warm welcome to all our members, volunteers and supporters for our tenth anniversary!

ANNOUNCEMENT (page 2)

Annual General Meeting

The Proposed Agenda for the Assembly

1. Words from the President
2. Nomination of the President and the Secretary of the Assembly
3. Reading and adoption of the agenda
4. Approval of the minutes of the AGM of April 28, 2001
5. Presentation of the financial report for 2001 and the proposed budget for 2002
6. Report on activities of 2001 and proposed activities for 2002
7. Donations Policy
8. Revision of Internal Rules of Order
9. Election of the Board of Directors
10. Other

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Start Up of a New Year

Wow! Bravo! Extraordinary! Fantastic! Super! need I say more? Our request for funding for clean-up operations has been accepted! We will start our clean-up operations on May 11, 2002; ending sometime in October or early November.

Robert Léo Gendron
Clean-up Operations
Coordinator

This year we are trying to encourage participation of people from all walks of life by organizing special clean ups. We have planned four specific themes : a special day for politicians , a day for industry, a day for youth and a day for municipalities. By putting all our heads together at Action Saint François, other ideas are sure to emerge and will be announced in the media. All the same, you can participate in any of our clean up operations regardless of the category because we always need volunteers.

This year we will be concentrating on waterways of the Saint François river basin that we have not yet cleaned. Actually many of the water courses are situated in Saint-François-Xavier-de Brompton and in Stoke.

You will continue to hear about us with our exposition of artistic works made from garbage found along the river banks with our new partners, the artists of Horace Gallery. Another plan is to organize a photo exhibit of our clean-up operations with the Biosphere (the former Expo 67 United States pavilion). This Montréal event is yet to be confirmed.

There will be many interesting projects to complete again this year. Remember, it is your volunteer participation that allows them to happen. Without volunteers-no clean-ups, it's that simple.

So give us a call in early May to let us know when you are available and how you can participate. Two contact numbers : first Action Saint-François office

at 563-5362 and my home number 820-1925.

Thanks in advance for your collaboration.



Notice of Annual General Meeting of Action Saint François

April 27, 2002 at 1 o'clock
At the Chaudronnée,
470 Bowen South, Sherbrooke

There will be two special presentations between 1:00 and 3:00 before the business meeting. Marie-Claude Bibeau representing Cité des rivières (The City of Rivers) will discuss the environmental aspects of this local project. We will also have the opportunity to hear Roberto Toffoli of MAPAQ, as well as see a video concerning the provision of drinking water to animals outside of the waterways.

The Proposed Agenda for the Assembly (see page 1).

Important

Point 7 will present the results of the Board sub committee on the Donations Policy.

Point 8 will present the Board of Director's proposed modifications to the Internal Rules of Order. These

proposed modifications are as follows :

- Change the number of directors from seven to nine. This would require a modification in the size of the quorum for meetings of the Board of Directors and the modification of the number of directors elected each year.
- Free the directors of the obligation to pay membership fees while holding office.
- Repeal of the clause that prevents directors from holding office in more than one environmental organization.
- Repeal of Sections VII to XII that present administrative structures that have never been used in ASF.

« The Water Law » recent shock-documentary

by Robert Monderie and Richard Desjardins

Robert Monderie, the Assistant director of Richard Desjardins documentary *L'Erreur boréale* (The Boreal Error), is now implicated in the big problem of water management in Quebec.

Robert Léo Gendron

The director starts his film by discussing the commercialization of water. He explains how the World Water Council affiliated with the World Commerce Organization, are presently working on the first steps toward the commercialization of water. That is –putting a price on water. The next step, will be to ask governments to give money to the poor to enable them to buy this life essential. As you can see, they have not yet convinced governments to accept the idea of privatizing water.

In this film we learn that Quebec will never run out of water since the evaporation of the ocean deposits one metre of water onto Quebec territory each year. Quebec has more drinking water than any other territory in the world. Thus the growing interest in exploiting our water. There are now about 40 factories collecting water; they remove about 440 million litres of water a year. If we take into account the number of permits given out by the Ministry of the Environment, the number of factories will increase tenfold in the near future.

The real problem according to Robert Monderie is that we don't

know the expanse of the underground water system. For this reason we should be cautious about the management of this precious resource. In the past few years, many citizens' groups have manifested their disapproval of the exploitation of water. In 1997, the Bouchard government set up the Beauchamp Commission (Public Hearings on the Environment) in order to obtain a sense of public opinion on the topic.

One important question that comes out of the documentary is « Who does the water belong to? ». André Denis, a Franklin citizen, states « Water isn't a resource to sell. It is like air, we can use it as long as we don't make it into merchandise. Allowing it to be bottled in industrial quantities is giving our water to people who have little respect for what that means. » Then, Louise Vandelac of the group Eau-secours (Save the Water) of Montreal describes the paradox that we are in : « We give water to the big companies and they sell it in small plastic bottles for 150 million dollars a year. ».

Water Pollution

Next, Monderie encourages us to reflect on the pollution of water in Quebec. According to Dr. Henri-Claude Lavallée, professor of chemical engineering at the University of Quebec in Trois-Rivières, there are only 70 companies out of 2200 that are regulated. There is no systematic follow-up and very little information is available about the pollution

created by these factories. The Ministry of the Environment doesn't talk about it and people think that everything is fine. Even though certain companies openly state that they are not respecting environmental norms, no action is taken by the Ministry of the Environment.

There are thousands of polluting substances that are dumped into our water. According to Michel Fournier, professor of Immunotoxicology at the INRS, many of these substances could undermine the work of certain natural hormones during embryonic development. These substances could create developmental problems like : sterility, malformations of the genitals etc.

Agricultural water pollutants (pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides) added to the industrial pollution, have resulted in certain malformations in frogs living near the waterways into which the « agricultural soup » has been dumped. Many species of fish have disappeared from these waterways in the past thirty years.

In conclusion, the author tells us that there is no water law other than the law of silence. He adds it is in our best interests to reconstruct the Ministry of the Environment. André Beauchamp closes in saying, « **The Ministry of the Environment's vague knowledge of many of these documents about the politics of water is rather disturbing.** »

A forceful film worth seeing!

United Farming for viable agriculture

On January 29, 2002, I attended the first Townships meeting of the new agricultural organization called l'Union Paysanne (United Farming). This group proposes an alternative to the existing agricultural industry which is based on mass production at all cost, creates farm-factories and uses farming technics (chemical fertilizers, liquid manure, pesticides, single crop farming and mega-stockbreeding) that are pushing us toward agricultural disasters, the contamination of drinking water and the devastation of rural areas.

Robert Léo Gendron

According to the President of the Board of Directors of the organization, Roméo Bouchard, in order to make this necessary change towards viable agricultural farming, we must collectively create a policy of agriculture based on the following objectives :

- control of foodstuffs
- safe foodstuffs
- diversity of foodstuffs and organic foodstuffs
- dynamic possession of the countryside
- protection of the rural environment
- quality of life for farmers, country dwellers and consumers

To reach these objectives the most urgent measures to be taken are the following :

- encourage small farms and local marketing to stop the industrialization of farms and the exodus of rural inhabitants
- guarantee the quality of foodstuffs and the environment
- restore rural citizenship

United Farming is not against United Agricultural Producers (UPA) and is certainly not against farmers. Rather, it is against the agricultural business interests that free-trade imposes on farmers and other citizens, to their detriment. The group is in favour of a pooling of everyone's en-

ergy to participate in the construction of an alternative to the present situation of unhealthy foodstuffs and the desertion of the countryside.

Declaration of Principles of United Farming

(Note : what follows is not an official translation.
Taken from the French language internet site
www.unionpaysanne.com

UNITED FARMING's goal is to create an organized, collective force representing everyone interested in agriculture and farming to counter balance the monopoly of union representation and the powerful agricultural industry lobbyists and promoters of free-trade who favour a big business model of agriculture.

UNITED FARMING advocates two key elements : self sufficiency of agriculture in order to provide the population with healthy and diversified foodstuffs while respecting nature, the soil, the animals, the environment and the community; and the possession of the countryside in order to ensure the maintenance of many farmers on the land.

UNITED FARMING favours an agricultural system which supports and encourages :

1. Automomous, diversified, small scale farming, creating local jobs, easily transmitted and not larger than approximately 100 ani-

mals or 100 hectares or \$200,000 in business.

2. Transformation and marketing on the farm or in small businesses either local, regional or specialized.

3. Agricultural practices that respect the soil, the animals, the environment and the health of human beings. Some of these practices are :

- crop rotation
- grazing of livestock and their access to the outdoors
- management of manure, use of litter and composting of manure
- limiting the number of animals to the capacity of cultivated land
- protection and conservation of agricultural biodiversity
- protection of waterways and underground water, woods and the countryside
- collective management of water-courses
- self sufficiency of nourishment for farm animals and a list of permitted nourishments and " intrants " excluding meat and bone meal, hormones and antibiotics as growth stimulants
- elimination of products of synthesis, GMO, patents on living creatures and the irradiation of food
- taxing of " intrants " that bring about social and environmental costs including energy

4. The enlarging of the status of producer, agricultural programs and production structures and the marketing (joint projects, quotas, regulations, agricultural credit, zoning etc.) to make room for new producers, for young people, part time farmers, producer-transformers, selling on the farm, local agriculture and agricultural diversity.

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Union paysanne : suite de la page 4

5. Rural democracy which gives back to all the rural citizens the power to develop their land and to speak openly about local industrial projects by decisional referendums.

UNITED FARMING also favours local management of forestry and fisheries in order that the profits from the exploitation of these resources is not reserved for big exportation businesses but allows local citizens, living where the resources are, to benefit from their existence and development in diverse companies on a small and family scale. In-shore fishing and the surrounding forest should be reserved for local exploitation.

UNITED FARMING believes that to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to re-establish free unions in the agricultural world and to modify the law which authorizes only one association to represent farmers,

T-shirts for sale

Great T-shirts: 100% cotton, in natural unbleached sandy-beige colour. Front shows the Action Saint-François logo (green) in full detail. Back: an original work of art depicting the watershed of the Saint Francis River. We would like to thank the artist, Isabelle Loignon, for her excellent volunteer work and her dedication to Action Saint-François.

T-shirts sell for \$15 each. Available in three sizes: medium, large, and extra-large. You can get yours by calling 563-5362, or dropping in to see us at Action Saint-François, 18 Wellington North, Sherbrooke. (It's best to call before you come.)



such that United Farming, a group created according to the law of professional unions, could officially rep-

resent producers and citizens concerned by agricultural issues.

Note : This is not an official translation

La belle saison

"Alana, where were you Saturday morning? I called early thinking I'd catch you at home. You don't work on Saturdays."

Alana Russell

Well actually I do. Sort of. Well, no it's not really work. Well, let me explain. I was in the forest on a river bank, the gurgling of the water calming my ears, the fresh scents of nature stimulating my nostrils, the feel of the damp earth under my feet and hands, a simple task temporarily liberating my mind from personal pre-occupations.

You see between May and October on Saturday mornings, I am doing the action of Action St François. I meet with a group of like minded individuals in a downtown parking lot before 8 AM. I often arrive around 7 :50 on my bicycle

dressed for bush-whacking; that is to say, long sleeves, long pants, boots and a hat. We stand around socializing and wondering who else will show up. Sometimes we are merely three or four. Sometimes ten or more. At 8 :00 the signal for departure is given. We pile into the available transport (not everybody arrives on a bicycle) and drive off in single file to our destination. We clamour out of the vehicles, find a "pair" of gloves (well one for each hand anyway) and listen while the instructions are clarified for newbies - different bags for glass, metal, plastics and junk and BE CAREFUL. We grab a few bags and head for the slopes. Some people choose to work in tandems, chatting as they go.

I often work alone. There is something about the " no brainer " task and being in nature that allows

you to just be yourself -no competition, no performance record. That's when it happens- the peacefulness I described earlier. Even when we are hefting huge pieces of car carcass up the incline in a human chain. Even when we are fighting with rolls of metal fencing that want to unroll or fall to pieces. Even when we must return week after week to the same site because there is so much debris to be removed. Even when the working conditions aren't perfect, there remains a sense of awe at what can be done in these few hours to assist in making the world a better place.

So don't call me on a Saturday morning between May and October unless it is pouring rain or you want to come with me to discover what this volunteer action might mean to you.

Action Saint-François

The new members of Action Saint-François from September the 30th, to Marsh 31st, 2001

ASCOT

Johanne Trempe

BROMPTONVILLE

Alexandre Saint-Laurent

FLEURIMONT

André Groleau
André Roberge
Benoit Lavoie
Christian Paquet
Germain Roy
Jacques Houde
Jean Gosselin
Luc & Monique Mathieu
Michel Villecourt
Pierre Biron
Richard Berthold
Roch Bibeau
Valérie Auclair

ROCK FOREST

Angèle Fortier
Céline Ruel
Chantal Foucher
Claire Poulin
Claude Laplante
Denis Marcil
Doris Morin
Élisabeth Piché
François Villeneuve
Françoise Boutin
Gaston Naessens
Ghyslaine Champagne
Guy Clavet
Hélène Mathieu
Jacques Colnoir
Jean Lacharité
Jean-François Cadieux
Jean-Luc Bergeron
Jocelyn Fréchette
Jocelyne Sauvé
Lyne Lefebvre

Marco Binet

Nathalie Duquette
Pauline Valence
Pierre Boulanger
Richard Robitaille
Robert Perreault
Serge Guay
Serge Malouin
Sophie Gauthier
Stéphane Brosseau
Sylvie St-Pierre
Sylvio Sabourin
Véronique Cibert

SHERBROOKE

Alain Palombini
André-Rémy Blais
Anita Sainte-Croix
Catherine Coderre-Porras
Catherine Larouche
Élyse Ménard
Germaine Bilodeau
Gilles Goneau
Gloria Duchesneau
Hugues Bergeron
Jean-François Veillette
Magela Tremblay
Marc Bolduc
Roland Gendron
Serge Proulx
Sœur Éliane Côté
Sylvie Perreault

WINDSOR

Louise Liard

Something to think about...

If we could reduce the world's population to a village of 100 people, while still maintaining the same proportions of all the people living in the world, this village would be composed as follows :

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 Americans (North, Central and South)
- 8 Africans.

There would be :

- 52 women and 48 men
- 30 whites and 70 non whites
- 30 Christians and 70 non Christians
- 89 heterosexuals and 11 homosexuals
- 6 people would have 59% of the total wealth and all 6 would come from the USA
- 80 live in poor houses
- 70 are illiterate
- 50 suffer from malnutrition
- 1 is dying
- 1 is being born
- 1 owns a computer
- 1 (yes, only one) has a University diploma.

If we consider the world in this manner, the need to accept and to understand each other becomes evident. Also, take into consideration the following :

- If you got up this morning more in health than in sickness, you are luckier than the million people who will not live to see next week.
- If you have never been in danger of war, the isolation of prison, the agony of torture, the grip of famine, you are better off than 500 million people.
- If you can go to a religious service without fear, or persecution, or being arrested, or tortured or dying ... you are luckier than 3 million people in the world.
- If you have food in your fridge, clothes to wear, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of the inhabitants of the earth.
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet or purse, and change in a little box, you are part of the wealthiest 8% in the world.
- If you read this message, you are twice lucky, because someone thought of you and especially because you do not belong to the two milliards of people who don't know how to read.

Send this to everyone that you consider a FRIEND, it will light up the day for each one. Nothing will happen if you decide not to. The only thing that will happen if you do is that someone might smile thanks to you.

Happy friendship week to you. (This text was originally received during the national week of friendship.)

67 people have join for the first time, Action Saint-François, since September 30th 2001.

Check us out on the Internet at :
<http://www.asf-estrie.org/asf/>



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Nos archives :
<http://www.asf-estrie.org/asf/journaux.htm>

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ACTION SAINT-FRANÇOIS A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN AUGUST 1992 BRINGS TOGETHER CITIZENS CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT. THE GROUP IS INTERESTED IN THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF AQUATIC MILIEUS OF THE SAINT-FRANÇOIS RIVER WATERSHED. CLEAN UP, EROSION CONTROL AND REPLANTING PROJECTS ALONG WATERWAYS AND FLOOD PLAINS ARE ORGANIZED BY ACTION SAINT-FRANÇOIS. WE WANT TO HEIGHTEN AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION TO THE NECESSITY TO ACT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE HYDROLOGICAL NETWORK OF OUR TERRITORY. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE 25\$. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL US AT (819) 563-5362.