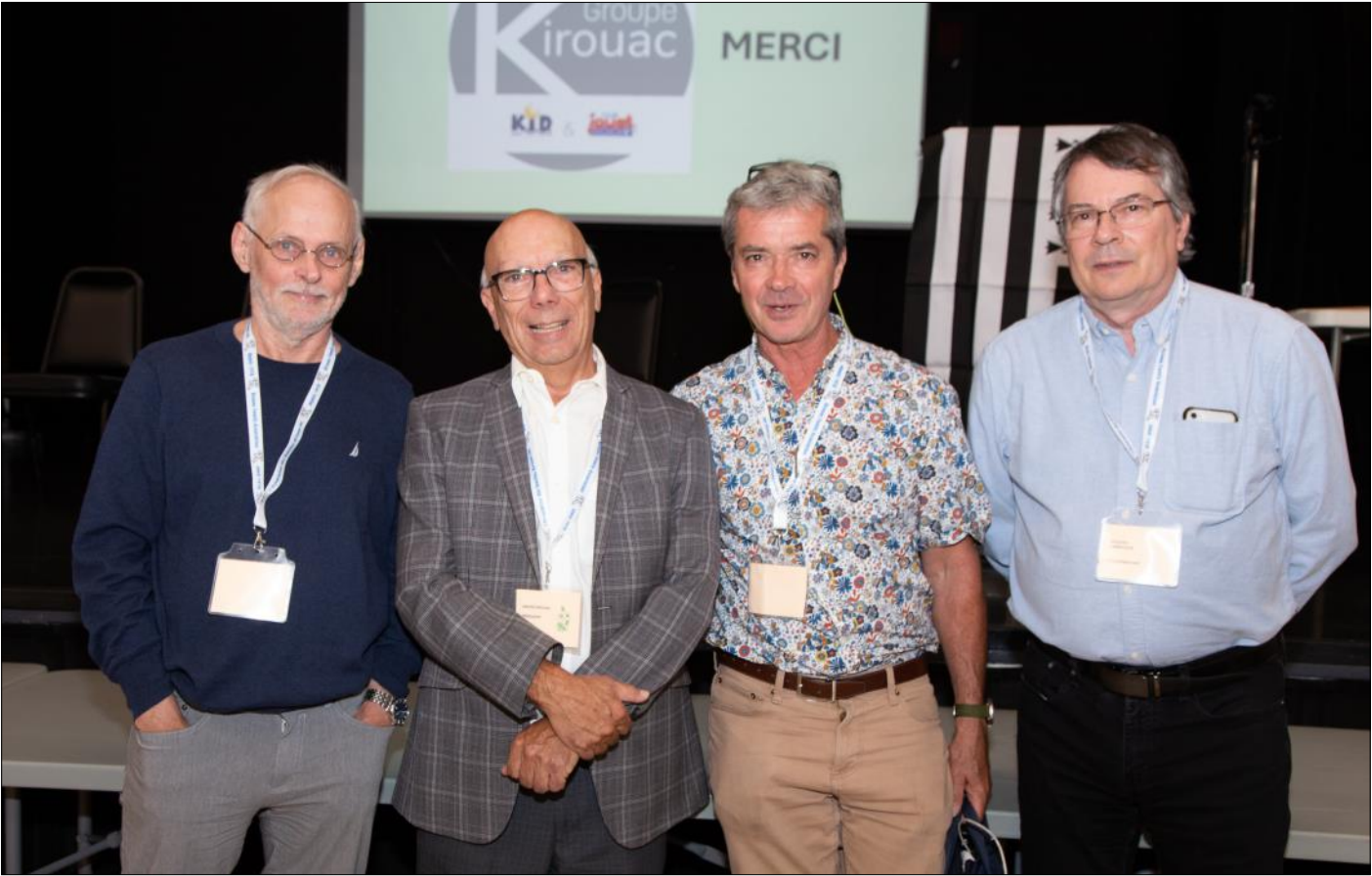


Autumn 2025 Number 149

Le Trésor des Kirouac

Bulletin of the descendants of Alexandre de K/voach
Witness to Kirouac Activities since 1983



The first edition of **KIROUAC PUBLIC EVENT** took place on 6 September 2025, the theme was History and Botany. Our Association was marking the 90th anniversary of the *Flore laurentienne*, Brother Marie-Victorin's (Conrad Kirouac), key work. The first edition came out in 1935. Three well-known specialists accepted our invitation to speak about it: **Yves Gingras**, professor at UQAM (Quebec University at Montreal), **Mathieu-Robert Sauvé**, journalist, author and researcher, and **Jacques Labrecque**, botanist. Here they are, from left to right, with André Kirouac, KFA president. (Photo: Pierre Kirouac)

-  Kirouac
-  Kérouac
-  Keroac
-  Kéroack
-  Breton
-  Curwack
-  Kirouack
-  Kérouack
-  Keroack
-  Kyrouac
-  Burton
-  Curwick
- 

Le Trésor des Kirouac

Le Trésor des Kirouac, the bulletin of all the descendants of Alexandre de K/voach, is published in two separate editions: French and English and is distributed to all AFK/KFA members. Permission to reproduce an article must be obtained beforehand from *Association des familles Kirouac inc.*, KFA, as well as permission from the author of the article.

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At its discretion, the KFA Editorial Board can edit and shorten texts submitted for publication in *Le Trésor des Kirouac* (including texts for the TRESOR EXPRESS); the KFA Editorial Board also reserves the right to refuse to publish text, photo, caricature, or illustration, deemed of no interest to the KFA mission or likely to cause prejudice either to the Association, to one of its members, or to any person, group of persons, or any organization. Revised text will be published only with the author's prior consent as he/she is still fully accountable for its content.

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The President's Word

Greetings! Autumn lingers. Winter is on its way. In one of his ballads, Joe Dassin sang about the Indian summer, part of a colourful Autumn in New England and Eastern Canada followed by the first snow. Time to clean up the gardens, get ready for Winter. Some are perhaps already thinking about Christmas gifts, cooking hot meals while wondering about travelling to warmer climes to escape from the cold.

Why am I telling you this? For several reasons. First because I just returned from Brittany, where I had the pleasure to spend some time with Pierre Le Bris's wife and daughter. Even after sixty years, the memory of Jack's 1965 visit is still vivid. The two ladies remembered the time when it was decided to name their country house "Villa Kerouac". Secondly, I am telling you this because, if people on the other side of the Atlantic are interested in us, let us ask ourselves: are we interested in our own history!

Many of us are privileged to think so. But, in our towns and villages, others do not have such opportunities. Where to live? How to buy clothes? What is for dinner tonight? I certainly hope that none of you reading this have to face such questions. If that were the case, I hope that services are available or that help from friends and family members is at hand.

Why write such an introduction? Because I understand that some people think that being interested in family history and about our unusual family name may seem futile and a waste of time. Today's pace of life and so much sad news leaves little respite. Yet, what can we rely on when wanting to better understand the world we live in? How to find out? Well, why not through history? Finding out about our origins and through history in general. History of our community, of our country and of the world where our ancestors lived and where we live.

It seems important to me that every one of us, dear readers, demonstrates the importance of preserving our memory, and the memory of our parents and ancestors. It is important to pass it on to our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. We must tell our stories to the next generations. "Alice, did you know that your great-grandfather lived in the Far North? And you, Émile, let me tell you the story of a very unique and famous priest..."

Everyone has Kirouac memories to pass on to the younger generations and can help to do so. Of course, it would make very happy if one of the ways to do so included renewed enthusiasm to join the *Kirouac Family Association*.



André Kirouac

On our Kirouac Family Website (www.familleskirouac.com), there are many biographies, stories and tales to be found ready to be passed on. The Ancestor's descendants from his two sons, the two main branches starting in the early 18th century, will soon be online on the KFA Website. This is a wonderfully rich and well documented source of information for all; particularly for the younger generations who can use this information in their studies and school projects. It only costs \$22 per year. I enjoy playing PR and travelling salesman, I admit it, but your association is not trying to sell you a carpet sweeper, these are precious memories for you and yours.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season. A good ending to this year and a great new year. May the New Year live up to your expectations. — André Kirouac



*Merry Christmas
Happy New Year 2026*

Kirouac Public Event, 5 & 6 September 2025



André Kirouac speaking to members during the AGM, held on 5 September 2025 at Restaurant Quai 1635, a historical wharf at Cap-Rouge (near Quebec City). (Photo: Pierre Kirouac)



Photo: Pierre Kirouac

Partial view of the Quai 1635 Restaurant at Cap-Rouge where the Kirouac Family Association's 37th annual General Meeting was held on Friday, 5 September 2025.



Photo : Pierre Kirouac

From left to right: Stéphane Kirouac, member of the Board of Directors, Greg Kyrouac and his wife, Nancy Beckman Kyrouac flew in from Ashland, Illinois for the gathering.

AFK Treasurer René Kirouac addresses members during the presentation of the financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2024. From left to right, we can see in the foreground: Jean-Guy Kirouac (one of the founding members) and Marie-Thérèse Girard-Kirouac, wife of our master photographer. In the background are François Kirouac (former president of the Association) and (from behind) Sylvie Houde, wife of our treasurer, René Kirouac.

(Photo: Pierre Kirouac)



Kirouac Public Event, 5 & 6 September 2025



The 37th AGM held on 5 September 2025 was the opportunity to thank the four members leaving the Board for their firm commitment after many years of service.

François Kirouac, one of the fifteen KFA founding members in 1978, held various posts on the Board, including counsellor (1978-1988) and (2002-2005), vice-president (1988-1989) and secretary (1989-2002) before being elected president in 2005 and holding the reins until 2024 and leaving the KFA Board on 5 September 2025. Since 1988 he has been responsible for the family genealogy and also publishing two major books: starting with the first Kirouac genealogical dictionary in 1991, then, in 2013, the *Synthesis about the Ancestor, his wife and their sons*. He also instigated the creation of research funds to finance the research about the Ancestor in Brittany and the conception of a commemorative plaque installed at Huelgoat. In April 2008, he was awarded the **Distinguished Volunteer Award** from the *Fédération des familles souches du Québec* (Federation of Quebec founding families).

Here is François and his successor as president, André Kirouac. (Photo: Pierre Kirouac)

Mercédès Bolduc and her husband, Marc Villeneuve, with the KFA president, André Kirouac.

After her first mandate from 2006 to 2012, Mercédès joined the KFA Board again in 2013. For the past twelve years, she and her husband made sure that our annual gatherings were a success.

As for Marc, besides being the KFA vice-president and helping out with the annual gatherings, he also spent a lot of time and knowledge looking after the social networks. Thanks to his commitment to study DNA and his determination to see it applied, we finally unearthed the true ancestor of the Kirouac branch from Douglstown. (Photo: Pierre Kirouac)



Céline Kirouac, a Board member since 2001, was KFA Vice-president for 24 years, until last year when one of the two V-P posts was cancelled. She was also the meeting secretary for well over ten years.

In addition, Céline leaves the KFA documentation greatly enriched: she, with Lucille Kirouac created the **Index** of all articles published in the *Trésor des Kirouac* and still add to it regularly. Together Céline and Lucille co-wrote and co-signed many articles including the very important collection known as *Philippe's Papers*.

Here Céline receives a token of appreciation from André Kirouac, the KFA president.

(Photo: Pierre Kirouac)

Kirouac Public Event, 5 & 6 September 2025



Photo : Pierre Kirouac

André Kirouac welcomes the participants attending the first Kirouac Public Event held at the Durocher Centre, in Quebec City, on 6 September 2025.



Photo : Pierre Kirouac

Attendees at the Durocher Centre in Quebec City on 6 September 2025.



Mathieu-Robert Sauvé answering questions after the three guest speakers' presentation.
(Photo: Pierre Kirouac)

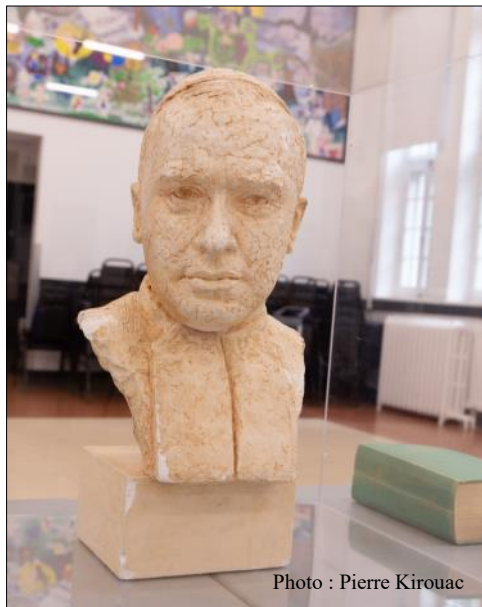


Photo : Pierre Kirouac

Besides his vast collection of rare books, Jacques Labrecque, one of our three guest speakers, brought a bust of Brother Marie-Victorin for all to admire at the Durocher Centre in Quebec City during the first Kirouac Public Event on 6 September 2025.



Photo : Pierre Kirouac

André Kirouac presenting Marie Kirouac, the lucky winner, with the copy of *Flore laurentienne*, generously given by Library PANTOUTÉ, one of our sponsors.

Kirouac Public Event, 5 & 6 September 2025

Summary of the conferences

Conrad Kirouac (1885-1944), Brother Marie-Victorin

"So many unexplored fields"

Mathieu-Robert Sauvé¹

On 16 March 1908, Conrad Kirouac wrote in his private diary that he has just discovered natural sciences! "I am only on the threshold and catching a glimpse of it but already they fascinate me. I am particularly fascinated by the world of plants. The flora; so many unexplored fields (...)"

At the time, the 23-year-old religious brother, member of the De LaSalle order, is still years away to imagine that he will become a famous botanist and the future founder of many institutions still going strong today. He is already extremely curious about sciences, an interest he will carry through his life.

He will never flinch from his dedication to religious life, and he will pursue both a teaching career and scientific research, as well as taking part in the foundation of the (Montreal) Botanical Institute, Montreal Botanical Garden and ACFAS (French-Canadian association for promoting scientific knowledge in French).

However, the Brother's life is undermined by frail health. Afflicted with tuberculosis from a young age, his life expectancy does not look good. But these worries do not slow him down. He is not twenty yet when he becomes a teacher at the Longueuil College. There he creates a literary circle. One of his life's passion. He will organize over 600 sessions. Thirty to forty people would attend each session discussing a variety of subjects like Canada, forests, newspapers, famous persons. Two or three plays would be produced every year including some written by Marie-Victorin himself.

In 1920, the literary man becomes an established scientific and from then on, he will be spending all his energies training botanists at the brand-new Department of Sciences at the new Montreal University. "Though he has no

university degree and is a self-taught botanist, trained literally "in the field" with limited resources, his solid reputation is already established, as one reads in the Encyclopedia of Canadian Biographies. From 1908 on, he published 39 observations, articles and a scientific work about the Province of Quebec's flora as well and some sixty articles popularizing science. His reputation is solidly established among his many foreign colleagues just as with the local population. Thus, he is immediately named Associate Professor by the University of Montreal.



Photo: KFA collection

Our cousin Conrad in his office at the Montreal Botanical Garden.



Photo: Mathieu-Robert Sauvé collection

In 1929, he leads a tour of Africa, Europe and the Middle East that will stimulate his future work. After his colossal *Flore laurentienne* (Laurentian Flora) in 1935, he worked on a similar project in Cuba. He is definitely one of the most famous members of the Kirouacs. Sadly, Brother Marie-Victorin will die too early in a car accident in 1944.

¹ Journalist and author, Mathieu-Robert Sauvé's biography of Conrad Kirouac, entitled *LE LAURENTIEN*, published by VLB Editor, was launched on 19 November 2025 at the Montreal Botanical Garden.



Gentianopsis victorinii

Kirouac Public Event, 5 & 6 September 2025

Summary of the conferences

JACQUES LABRECQUE

Flore laurentienne – from a botanist's point of view

Talk given by Jacques Labrecque on 6 September 2025

The *Laurentian Flora* is 90 this year. It is extremely rare to see a flora being used so long. (Figure 1). Indeed, its popularity and enduring appeal can be explained by the fact that it is more than just a flora but combines themes giving it an appeal that goes beyond that of a professional botany book. We could even say that it is midway between pure science and popularization. At the time it was published, floras were books used only to identify plants, whereas *Flore laurentienne* includes various very interesting themes for a professional botanist: a general overview of the Quebec flora, illustrations of almost every type, identification keys and concise descriptions, a glossary of technical terms, and a remarkably well-prepared index. All this put together makes *Flore laurentienne* an excellent flora for the time. *Laurentian Flora* from a botanist point of view.

But its real appeal to all plant enthusiasts, professionals or not,

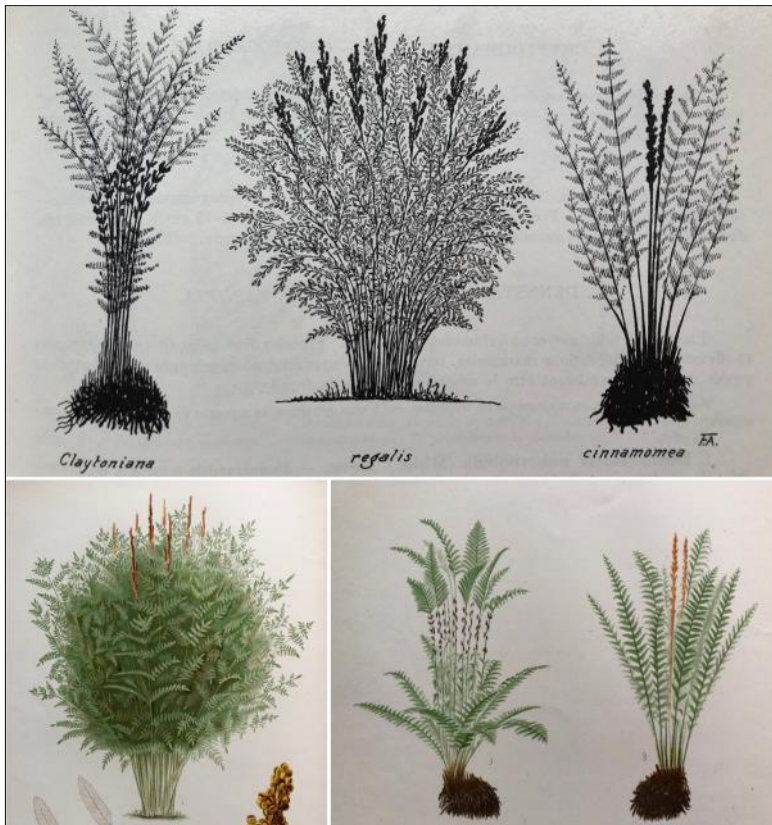


Figure 2. Comparing genre in *Flore laurentienne* and *Ferns of North America* for the genus *Osmunda*.



Figure 1. Several versions of *Flore laurentienne* from 1935 to today. (Jacques Labrecque collection)

is, above all, Marie-Victorin's encyclopedic notes, covering many topics of interest (historical, taxonomic, phytogeographical, medicinal, etc.) written with great literary quality. Some contemporary critics chided Marie-Victorin for his lack of references for certain illustrations and encyclopedic notes. By chance, I found the source of his notes on cannabis (*Provancher's Canadian Flora*, 1863) and illustrations about ferns (*Ferns of North America* by Eaton, 1879; Figure 2).

Of course it would have been interesting to know all the sources of Marie-Victorin's comments but this does not diminish the importance of the *Laurentian Flora*. Since its publication in 1935, the *Flora* was re-edited twice, in 1964 and in 1995/1997; however, the text is essentially the same. The last edition includes a great number of photos and references as well as an up-to-date nomenclature and many additional notes were added since 1935.

However, since the third edition, thirty years have gone by and our botanical knowledge keeps progressing. Recently the *Flore nordique du Québec et du Labrador (Labrador & Nordic Quebec Flora)* was published in five volumes under the direction of Serge Payette (2013-2024).

So, when will there be a new Flora of Southern Quebec to fulfill Marie-Victorin's original vision?

KIROUAC FAMILY ASSOCIATION INC.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025 – ANDRÉ KIROUAC

MEETINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

We held four Board meetings and now it is possible to hold them either in person or online. At last year's AGM, two new persons joined our Board, Mrs. Nathalie Keroack and Mr. Stéphane Kirouac. This year, four positions are open because four members are leaving: François Kirouac, Céline Kirouac, Mercédès Bolduc and Marc Villeneuve. They are long-time friends and will certainly remain very close to our Association. I begin my report by thanking them most warmly not just for the way they supported me this past year but especially for the dozens of years each one of them worked for our Association allowing it to endure and grow. Between the four of them their time on the Board adds up to 104 years!

I also want to express my gratitude to many others who volunteer their time for our Association and make it possible for all to enjoy activities and publications. Thanks to Marie Lussier Timperley, Lucille Kirouac, Thérèse Kirouac, Robert Kirouac, Mark Pattison, and Greg Kyrouac.

ACTIVITIES

Through this past year, I could always count on, and benefit from, the Board members' knowledge and constant assistance at all levels of our organization. I asked each one to prepare a short report about their volunteer work and, especially, leave a message about what they see for the future of our Association.

- **François Kirouac, genealogical research**
- **Céline Kirouac, P.R. links with the community**
- **Nathalie Keroack, promotion**
- **Stéphane Kirouac, sponsorships**

- **Marc Villeneuve, Facebook and DNA Research**
- **André Kirouac, Website and archives**

This past year we revised various aspects of our website. All issues of *Le Trésor des Kirouac* were put online in PDF format. We also rearranged the tabs to simplify reaching the sections. The main addition was made on the home page: a new method to pay annual membership and register to our activities. This year, the general public could register online for our conferences and, from next year onwards, all members will be encouraged to do so. Many thanks to François for his precious help in organizing it all.

FUTURE

Before addressing this report's main topic, I want to give the floor to the Board members. You certainly read in the latest *Trésors* that, like several family associations, we are at a crossroads. No point hiding the fact that membership is waning as well as the number of people attending our annual gatherings. Revenues are also going down and without the interests from the Jacques Kirouac Fund, we would have to make some difficult choices, like cutting down the number of yearly *Trésor*, our news bulletins, and offering biennial gathering instead of yearly ones ...

Among similar robust associations, I believe the KFA has a strength that no others have. This year particularly, I learned about the genealogical research that François Kirouac is doing. I was blown away. It is incredible. The depth of work done is unparalleled.

Our website, due mostly to François, is the most comprehensive I have ever seen. As

for our bulletin, *Le Trésor*, again François' doing, and its precious collaborators, is an example of the best way to reach families, particularly with the English edition. *Thanks to Marie Lussier Timperley, Mark Pattison, and Greg Kyrouac.*

The KFA has solid foundations, world-class personalities, a well-functioning structure and, yet we face several challenges.

This year we will seriously reflect about our future. While other family associations are giving up – even the Federation is closing its doors -- we keep going!

We need to fill vacancies on the board. We need to think about new funding sources. We need to reach our relatives, friends and the public at large and invite them to become members.

We need to reflect about our future gatherings and *Le Trésor*.

Does it look like a huge challenge? Yes, I admit. And we need to seriously think about it. This is what I invite you to do, you the actual members and those who will join us this year. A Board member's mandate is two years, I don't ask for more than that. In 2025-2026, the aim is not to overburden anyone with work but to take part in four or five meetings spread through the year.

This year, we will also be able to hold our meetings remotely virtually, and they will be bilingual. We need ideas from our American cousins. Thanks to Jack, the K/rouacs are possibly better known there in the USA than in Canada. Let's take advantage of this fact.

I even hope that our board of directors will become increasingly international and, who knows, perhaps even include members from Brittany. Again, thank you for your trust.

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS

François Kirouac

Genealogy

This year our priority was to complete the preparation to put the genealogical data online next year, a major project. In order to do so, we meticulously revised and amended the notes for every person and standardised 5,363 toponyms and 3,763 sources.

On top of this huge work, our data base keeps growing! 721 descendants of Alexandre de Kervoach have been added for a total of 44,905 including 19,504 couples. As of now, Simon-Alexandre has 8,284 descendants and Louis, 8,050. There are also 325 Kirouac descendants in the Douglastown branch.

Le Trésor des Kirouac

As usual, we published three issues in 2025. The next issue will be number 149, given that the first one published in 1983 was number 0, it really is our 150th issue, an important milestone. I will do the digital layout for the 83rd time. More important news: another **Special Issue of *Le Trésor des Kirouac*** is now on the KFA website: The life of **Sister Cécile Kirouac 1907-2007**. Thanks to Marie Lussier Timperley's translation, our English-speaking cousins can now read the story of this exceptional musician.

Céline Kirouac

In the past year, 2024-2025, with Lucille Kirouac, I worked on the Index of all articles published in the *Trésor*, as we make sure to keep this index up to date. Lucille

Kirouac and I also did the proofreading of all the articles for each French edition of *Le Trésor*. Also, part of my work as a Board member for this year's annual gathering I helped prepare a special book exhibition about Marie-Victorin and the *Flore laurentienne*.

This book exhibition has been made possible thanks to the generous contribution of Jacques Labrecque, botanist, our guest speaker, who has been collecting Marie-Victorin's works for decades. He kindly lends us his treasured old editions for which he prepared historical notes and information for each book. When visiting his home, we admired his impressive collection, not only extraordinary in size and in quality too; all his books are expertly sorted and labelled and, of course, he knows their stories and history in detail. Leaving the KFA Board after so many years, I keep only happy memories of sharing and working with a formidable team.

Nathalie Kéroack

As a councillor, I participated in meetings, mostly online from Nova Scotia. This is my first time on a board and I still have a lot to learn, but we have certainly established that distance is not a barrier.

From the beginning of the year, we recognized that in order to breathe new life into future gatherings, we could try to reach a wider audience, beyond KFA members. From there was born the idea of the **Rencontres Kirouac**.

My first task was to create a contact list for a targeted audience. On the theme of the 90th anniversary of the publication of Marie-Victorin's *Laurentian Flora*, we focused on genealogy, history and horticultural societies in the Quebec City region. My first draft of this contact list was completed in January from the

leads provided by André. At this point, I wasn't sure how we were going to make the contacts (emails, mail, phone, in-person visits?), so I put it all in a Word document.

Around June, the procedure to follow for the promotion of the meeting became somewhat clearer. At André's request (and with his assistance), I composed a press release to publicize our event.

At the beginning of July, I contacted about twenty organizations by email, with an attached press release describing the details of the event, asking them to please share with their members, partners, etc. Only two organizations responded in the affirmative, the other emails remained unanswered.

A follow-up with these organizations was made at the beginning of August (by *Messenger*) via their *Facebook* page, four of them agreed to publish our announcement on their page. Of those who refused, the reason was that they only publish events organized by their own organization.

I learned how to promote the first edition of the **Rencontres Kirouac** on three platforms accessible to the general public: *Le fil d'histoire*, *La Vitrine*, and *Quoi Faire* (in Quebec City); thank you André for these leads.

As for the publication of a press release in the traditional media (newspapers, radio, television), I have discovered that this is generally only possible from a program or a section that deals specifically with the subject.

Finally, I also ventured into the design of an advertising poster, to get our ad placed on the bulletin boards of the four libraries closest to the Durocher Centre.

To summarize the promotion efforts from start to finish, I transferred all the contacts from the Word document to an Excel file, adding all the other contact possibilities identified along the way. This document (in the appendix) will allow us to analyze what has worked, or not.

Conclusions: Although the promotional efforts to reach the general public has not produced the desired results, it is important to remember that this is a first for us; we learn as we go. Without the help of André, Céline, François, Marc, I would not have been able to establish all these contacts. I became familiar with platforms for promoting public events, and we

learned that placing posters in local libraries is feasible and free.

Challenges and solutions: If we plan a future Kirouac Public Event in 2026, now we have a better idea of what a promotion campaign entails, especially with using traditional media. Different formats and content to be presented based on the contacts or platforms targeted are to be expected, which requires more preparation to better meet deadlines. It is a lot of work that requires many hours, and technical skills using various software.

It is too early to know if our promotional activities have increased the KFA visibility, but we

have certainly learned a lot from this first exercise. Once again, thank you all for your support, wishing us all a fruitful year for 2025-2026.

Stéphane Kirouac

My name is Stéphane Kirouac. For those who have never met me before, I have been living in Lévis for the past 35 years, where my wife, Isabelle, and I, owned a pharmacy for 24 years. A year ago, I sold it and we retired. This experience taught me a great deal about business administration but even more about the importance of community life. Recently, the KFA president asked me to write letters requesting donations and



Kirouac Family Association, Board Members 2025-2026. From left to right: Greg Kyrouac (GFK 00239), Ashland, Illinois, Nathalie Kéroack (daughter of Jean-Paul, GFK 00150), Halifax, Nova Scotia, Catherine Kirouac Robinson (GFK 00905), Detroit, Michigan, Stéphane Kirouac (GFK 01489), Lévis, André Kirouac (GFK 02252), Québec, René Kirouac (GFK 02241), Québec. Absent, Danielle Girouard (granddaughter of Blanche Kirouac-Drolet, GFK 00577), Montréal. (Photo: Pierre Kirouac)

sponsorships for our Association. It was a challenge and I accepted it. Used to being on the receiving end of such letters, I had a good idea about the work involved. Also, having received many requests I knew what works and what does not. André believed that my business experience could be useful to fulfill the task.

The biggest challenge was to write distinctive and convincing letters. So, I used AI to help me structure the ideas, find the right words, and customize each request according to the targeted enterprise. The results were very encouraging, and positive replies were many. I am convinced that experience acquired in one domain can be useful in another. And the proof is that my entrepreneurial skills can benefit the association. I am very happy to be

part of this project and contribute to our family association. Thanks.

Marc Villeneuve

After two very exciting discoveries when we started, little progress was made in the DNA file during the past year. The first major advance in the DNA file was determining the Ancestor's genetic signature, now we know that the two sons of the Ancestor were two brothers.

The second very important discovery was unearthing the true ancestor of the Douglastown Kirouacs, DNA proved that they are the descendants of Jean Élie dit Le Breton.

As to confirming our Ancestor's origin, we cannot proceed in France as French Laws prohibit

recreational DNA testing. Furthermore, the extremely limited number of male descendants in the Le Bihan family, the family we believe our Ancestor belongs to, adds to the difficulty.

As for the Douglastown branch, we have found as much as possible given the number of DNA analyses done so far.

And, as Mr. Dominic Gagnon explained in his hypothesis presented in Le Trésor number 147, page 7, we need to find more descendants of Jean-Baptiste Élie and Catherine Gagné who will accept to take a DNA test allowing us to compare their results with those we already have.

New publication
LE LAURENTIEN, THE LIFE OF MARIE-VICTORIN
by Mathieu-Robert Sauvé
VLB Éditeur, 428p

***Journalist and author, Mathieu-Robert Sauvé's biography of Conrad Kirouac, entitled LE LAURENTIEN, published by VLB, Montreal, was launched on 19 November 2025 at the Montreal Botanical Garden. (428 pages)**

LE LAURENTIEN (The Laurentian Man), is the title of a new biography of Brother Marie-Victorin, who was born Conrad Kirouac in Kingsey Falls (Quebec Centre) in 1885. He was a frail child, but very curious by nature hence his attraction to all living things. His interest in sciences combined with his authentic faith, integral to the time, pulled him towards the Frères des Écoles chrétiennes; as their name indicates, Brothers of the Christian Schools, this religious order is dedicated to teaching primary, elementary and high school (known as the De LaSalle Brothers in English speaking countries). He is a self-taught researcher who soon enjoys a lot of prestige and autonomy that opens the doors of the newly independent University of Montréal where he creates the botanic laboratory, i.e. department of botany. He is an intellectual dedicated as much to popular education as cutting-edge sciences in French. He dreams big, and his works are impressive: he is the author of the *Flore laurentienne* (The Laurentian Flora) and the mastermind behind the Montreal Botanical Garden to name only two of his endeavours. He has a charismatic and complex personality. The biographer's chance – and ours, is that he left a treasure trove of writings: his diary as a young man, literary works, personal and scientific correspondence, herborization notes, travelling journals, numerous short notes, talks, lectures, and letters to newspapers. There we discover all the facets of a free spirit, alternately mischievous and feverish, penetrating and light. But also, and above all, we live through the heroic times of scientific Quebec alongside one of its builders.



KIROUAC FAMILY ASSOCIATION INC.
GATHERING ON 6 & 7 SEPTEMBER 2025
FINANCIAL RESULTS

INCOME	AMOUNT
Anonymous gifts	\$382.90
Transfer from American money	\$74.90
Registration to all activities	\$1,650.00
Public registration for talks (20 persons)	\$200.00
Club jouet -Sponsorship	\$600.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,907.80
EXPENSES	
Cold buffet lunch (\$42.02 per person)	\$1,344.52
Additional badge-holders	\$13.21
Two guest speakers	\$300.00
Morning Hall rent at CENTRE DUROCHER	\$676.05
Afternoon Hall Rent at CENTRE DUROCHER	\$193.16
TOTAL EXPENSES for gathering	\$2,526.94
SURPLUS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$380.86

PART COVERED BY THE KFA	
KFA REVENUE	
Books sold at the event	\$210.00
TOTAL KFA REVENUE	\$210.00
KFA EXPENSES	
AMOUNT	
Postage & printing of AGM ads-2025	\$260.04
Gifts given to four people leaving the KFA Board	\$325.00
TOTAL EXPENSES PAID BY KFA	\$585.04
SURPLUS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$-375.04
Event Surplus given to the KFA	\$5.82

NEW MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At our last AGM, we welcomed new members. Before introducing them, I am looking for the right words to thank most sincerely those who just left the Board: François Kirouac, Céline Kirouac, Mercédès Bolduc and her husband, Marc Villeneuve. Together, the four of them cumulated over hundred years of deep commitment to our Association. They held the reins of our organization for dozens of years and we owe them our annual gatherings, activities, publications and research. I know they will always remain close to us in thoughts and even offer tangible help.

If four have left the Board, three have joined, and our Board is becoming more international: Danielle Girouard from Montreal, Mary Catherine Kirouac Robinson from Detroit, Michigan, and Greg Kyrouac from Ashland, Illinois. More about them in the next pages. They are joining Nathalie Keroack, Stéphane Kirouac and, our treasurer, René Kirouac who is starting his 36th year on the KFA Board. In numbers, counting is easy, no need for to hold a Master's in Math: four departures and three arrivals. After many invitations over the last months, I am very grateful to Danielle, Cathy and Greg, who agreed to join us.

Yet, at election time, each year, it is a bit more difficult. We could be as many as ten on the Board; that would be ideal as it would be easier to distribute the various tasks. I will not hide that it takes time and work. We are talking about six meetings per year, but more and more "online". Time to think and decide, in both languages, French and English, on both sides of the border. I welcome and gladly receive emails from persons who would like to join the KFA Board!

We held our first meeting on 13 October 2025, in person and online between Canada and the States. A great first. André Kirouac is the president, Greg Kyrouac is our vice-president, Mrs. Danielle Girouard, our secretary, and René Kirouac remains our faithful treasurer.

During the coming 2025-2026 year, each meeting will have a theme. Naturally, first of all we discussed our 2025 gathering. Even after thinking a lot about it beforehand and worked hard to prepare it to renew interest in our annual gathering, the response was far less than expected, some were disappointed with the activity, or the quality as a whole. But holding the AGM on a Friday evening was deemed a good idea as long as it is followed by an engaging Saturday activity.

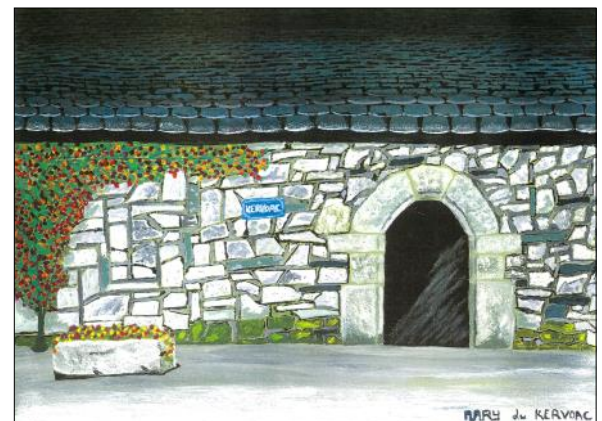
On Saturday afternoon, three renowned guests spoke about the 90th anniversary of the publication of the *Flore laurentienne*. The three presentations were perfect. They could not have been better. The chosen hall at the heart of the Saint-Sauveur district



was ideal and the equipment just right. However, reaching the area was difficult and the lack of parking problematic to say the least! This is a challenge to avoid for future gatherings.

Conclusion, for future gatherings, we need to think about our objective, carefully consider the various planning aspects and decide accordingly.

Read on, more about the planned future gatherings. At the next Board meeting in December, we will be thinking about our bulletin *Le Trésor des Kirouac*. Then in 2026, each meeting will consider a different theme, membership, recruiting, finances, etc.



Colour drawing by Maryvonne Le Coat representing part of the ancestor's home in Huelgoat offered to the 32 travellers on their return to their roots in July 2000.

Danielle Girouard, new Counsellor elected 5 September 2025

I was born in Montreal in 1954 and grew up in St-Lambert, on Montreal South-shore, and also in Trois-Rivières, always in a happy environment. My parents were well educated and loved music. My mother was a soprano, and my father was a lawyer who became a judge. I have three siblings, one brother and two sisters. I obtained my baccalaureate and a master's in musicology (history and musical literature) from University Laval, Quebec City. My master's subject was George Sand and music. For 35 years I was music librarian for Radio-Canada, CBC- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's French-speaking service, in the Music Department for radio and television. I retired in 2015. After bringing up my children, Gabrielle and Benoit, I am now a busy grandmother. I enjoy reading, travelling, and sports: ski and swimming, and teaching piano to my youngest granddaughter.

Blanche Kirouac, my maternal grandmother, whom but I hardly knew, was Conrad's sister. In the family, we were all very proud of Brother Marie-Victorin as he was known. My mother was Cécile Drolet. On the family

photo below, little Cécile is seated between her uncle Marie-Victorin and her father, Arthur Drolet. Although she had very little personal memory of her famous uncle, she made sure that we knew about him and about his career and life. Family is a priceless asset that I want to pass on to my children and grandchildren. My father, Jean Girouard, worked on the genealogy of his family, so I proudly know both my paternal and maternal ancestors.



Danielle Girouard, November 2025

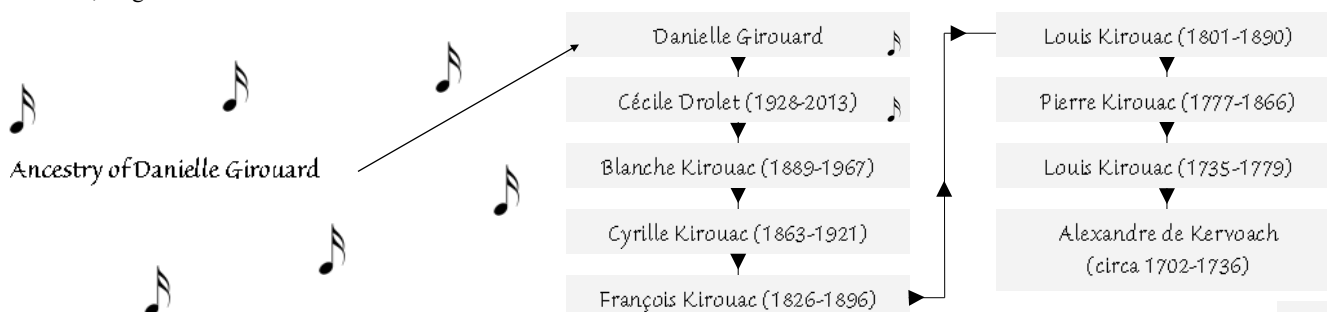


Photo: KFA collection

Photo taken at the Drolet family home at the occasion of Brother Marie-Victorin visiting his sister Blanche Kirouac-Drolet. Front row: Monique Drolet, Brother Marie-Victorin, Cécile Drolet, Mr. Arthur Drolet, Lucien Drolet, Mrs. Blanche Kirouac-Drolet, Madeleine Drolet. Back row: Jean-Charles Drolet, Roland Drolet, Roger Drolet and Maurice Drolet.



Blanche Kirouac (1889-1967)
(photo: KFA collection)



Cathy Kirouac-Robinson, new Counsellor elected 5 September 2025

My name is Mary Catherine Judith Elizabeth Kirouac Robinson or simply Cathy Robinson. I was the oldest of ten children and now there are only four of us. My father was Thomas Jules Andrew Joseph Kirouac and my mother was Genevieve Lucille Morang Kirouac.

I have had several jobs in my lifetime. The first was working for my father at his shop, then I worked at the **Detroit Free Press*** for a couple of years, and then at **Detroit Edison (DTE)** for 34 years when I early retired in 2001. **Detroit Edison*** was the name of the electric company when I first started. They changed their name to **DTE*** many years ago. Initially my job was to give tests to applicants and employees in the department that would be known today as Human Resources. My last two years I became a business analyst. I lost my job because of downsizing. Then my last job was at **Cornerstone Schools*** in Detroit for two years.

Volunteering has always been in my life especially when I was working. Since retiring, I have continued volunteering in several groups: **ABWA*** (American Business Women' Association) for 37 years. It is a national association with chapters in every State of the Union. We raise money for scholarships for women. I initially joined because I was looking for networking possibilities for other companies. Although I am retired, I have stayed because of the friendships I have made over the years and the ability to help raise funds for other women.

My sister, Diann, had MS (Multiple Sclerosis) which caused me to get involved with the **MS Society** in our town. For forty years we have had a team in the **Walk MS** which we named **Team Kirouac "On the Road" Again** and have raised over \$40,000 dollars to help with their mission. Even though Diann died in 2019, I am still involved with this group.

Volunteering for **The Parade Company*** for 47 years has been great. I started out as the mascot "Clownie" for seventeen years before I joined the Big Head Corps. I still take part in the annual Detroit Thanksgiving Parade, look out for the French doll.

I have been a volunteer with **I Heart Dogs Rescue and Animal Haven*** for six years, where Rex won my heart so, I could not resist adopting him!

I have been the Secretary for **Rendez-vous Detroit*** for eight years, that is since it was created.

I have been a member of the **Kirouac Family Association*** since the 1980's and I am extremely honored to be a board member and hope I will be able to contribute to this great group.



Photo: Cathy Kirouac-Robinson collection

Our new counsellor, Cathy, organized the KFA annual gathering held in Detroit on 19-20-21 July 2013.

Look up the gallery of photos and read the report published in **Trésor des Kirouac**, number 112, Autumn 2013, pp. 4-11- all on the KFA website at: <https://www.familleskirouac.com>:

<https://www.familleskirouac.com/%C3%A9tats-unis-central-tz>

* To find out more, please look up the Website.



Greg Kyrouac, new Counsellor elected 5 September 2025

I grew up in Bourbonnais, Illinois, a French-Canadian community established in the 1840s, 50 miles south of Chicago. I became interested in our family roots in 1975 when Bourbonnais celebrated its centennial, where my grandfather, Leo Kyrouac, told me that he did not know how, but he knew that the Kyrouac, Kerouac, Burton, and Curwick families were all related. He also showed me the location of his grandfather's unmarked grave in the church yard of Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church.

I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1978 with bachelor's degree in psychology and, in 1982, completed my master's degree in counseling through Eastern Illinois University.

While in graduate school, I began working with senior citizens and later, was recognized as one of fifty gerontological counselor trainers in the US in 1985. My career was mostly in non-profit administration, working with seniors, youth and the homeless.

I met Nancy Beckman, and we were married in 1981 in Highland, IL. She attended the first *Kirouac Family Association* gathering with me in L'Islet-sur-Mer in 1980 as well as the second in 1982.

We now have four adult children, Peter, Joseph, Lily, and Hope and eight grandchildren, Selah, Elliana, Serena, Teddy, Silas, Sam, Leon, and Helene, ranging from 14 to 2 years of age.

In 1988, we moved from Champaign, Illinois when I became

the first executive director of a statewide nonprofit agency based in Springfield, Illinois focused on addressing delinquency prevention and youth violence.

In 1993, I was hired as Assistant Professor at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield, where I was the director of outreach and education programs in the Alzheimer Disease Center, serving ninety-three of the 102 counties in Illinois outside of the Chicago area.

I oversaw the 30+ memory assessment centers in primarily rural Illinois and developed training programs for both professionals and non-professionals.

I also participated in numerous research projects, published journal articles, led support and educational groups, and presented our research in the USA, Canada, and China. I retired in 2020 but am still involved as a volunteer in two of the memory programs.

I traveled to Quebec in 1979 to learn of our Ancestor and learned that there was a gathering planned the following year.

Nancy and I were the two Americans on the *Return to the Sources* trip to our family roots in 2000, and we returned to Brittany with our two daughters and son-in-law in 2019.

In 2011, we hosted the *KFA* gathering in Kankakee/Bourbonnais, which brought Kyrouac, Kerouac, Burton, and Curwick family members together with others as well.

Since 2005, I have been involved in



Photo: Greg Kyrouac collection

the English edition of *Le Tresor* and working with François on the updates of our family genealogy.

I look forward to my new role as one of the first American board members on the *KFA* Board.

Re-Unification Kankakee-Bourbonnais 2011

See the gallery of photos on the *KFA* website at:

<https://www.familleskirouac.com/%C3%A9tats-unis-central-tz>

And read the article about the Re-Unification in *Trésor des Kirouac*, number 105, Autumn 2011, pp. 10-16 at: <https://irp.cdn-website.com/7bb0d2a7/files/uploaded/Le+Tr%C3%A9sor+105+automne+2011.pdf>



***Blanche* by Valérie Millet**

A Biography

Yankel, a wanted deserter fleeing the Polish pogroms, reached Brest in 1920, with his wife Rosa and their daughter Blanche. Growing up in that colourful city, Blanche developed a modern and confident outlook. It opened her mind to the world where she had memorable life-changing encounters. Her father, Yankel, worrying about the rise of Nazism, suggested to his daughter to go to Palestine ... But Blanche met **Pierre Le Bris** and they decided to get married one week before inter-faith marriages were banned.

When bombs were raining on Brest, Blanche and her family took refuge in the countryside. Both her parents were arrested and deported. She never saw them again. The aftermath was a two-year flight. For Blanche and Pierre, it was occupied Paris, betrayal, black market; their love grew under terrifying conditions.

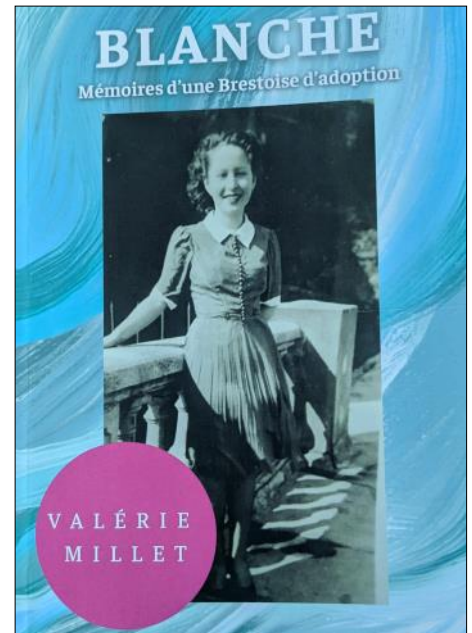
After the war, Pierre and Blanche saw first-hand the destruction and reconstruction of Brest. They shared decades of hard work to build and develop the **Librairie**

de la Cité (City Bookshop).

Blanche reveals some funny and delightful stories about the writers who came to sign their new books: Martin Gray, Auguste Le Breton, Guy des Cars, and, of course, **Jack Kerouac**.

In summer 2023, Trésor #142, you read about

Blanche when André Kirouac met her. She is alive and well and very proud of her 105 years and counting!



Valérie Millet and her mother, Blanche, wife of Pierre Le Bris
(Photo: André Kirouac)

KIROUAC NEWS

RÉCITS LAURENTIENS

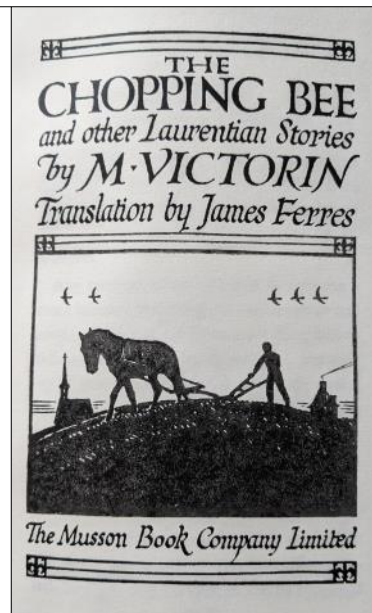
published in English in 1925!

Did you know that in 1925, a faithful English translation of Marie-Victorin's *Récits laurentiens* was published? The original French edition was printed just six years before, in 1919. The titles of the stories were even written in both languages, French and English.

For example, *La Corvée des Hamel* became *The Chopping Bee* (in French the word "corvée" refers to a task done voluntarily by many people. Your president could not resist trying to find a copy of this 1925 book and buying it of course.

The Chopping Bee and Other Laurentian Stories, translated by James Ferbes. Illustrated by Thoreau MacDonald was published in Toronto, Ontario, by Musson Book, in 1925, 225 pages!

Votre président n'a pu résister à chercher un exemplaire et se le procurer. *The Chopping Bee and Other Laurentian Stories*, traduction des *Récits laurentiens* par James Ferbes. Illustrations de Thoreau MacDonald. Toronto, Musson Book, 1925, 225 p.



Cosse-tu pense mon p'tit bonhomme (What are you thinking about, my little man?)

Play presented on 18 October 2025 at the Museum of Civilisation in Quebec City

This literary show was first tested in 2023 at the Correspondances d'Eastman, in Eastman, Eastern Townships, presenting the literary world of the revolted Jack Kerouac and his wandering.

The title and text are in colloquial Quebec French; fast and provocative language of a poet looking for his identity during the dizzying era of the Fifties, conjuring that terrible post-war anxiety and closely related to the perilous estrangement from his Quebec origins, also dating back from the 1950s.

The play features the author and actor Robert Lalonde and singer-songwriters Karèya and Tomas Jensen.

Source: [Cosse-tu penses mon p'tit bonhomme? – Correspondances](#)



Photo: Francine Kirouac, 2014

Zach Bryan buys St. Jean-Baptiste Church in Lowell, MA, to transform it into the Jack Kerouac Center

LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS — Bryan's involvement marks a turning point, bringing vital funding and renewed energy to the years-old project, initially stalled amid funding issues. Multi-Platinum, Grammy-winning artist Zach Bryan has purchased the historic former Saint Jean Baptiste Church building in Lowell, Massachusetts, ensuring its transformation into the previously announced Jack Kerouac Center. The project was initially announced in November 2022, but stalled amid the COVID-19 pandemic and funding issues. The collaboration between Bryan and the Jack Kerouac Estate marks a significant step toward honoring the legacy of one of America's most iconic writers while fostering creativity in the heart of Kerouac's hometown.

NEWS FROM TWO FRANÇOIS

The François Kirouac Award for the Advancement of Family Genealogical Research

At the AGM, on the president's proposal, all members agreed to create:

The François Kirouac Award for the Advancement of Family Genealogical Research.

François has devoted decades of his life, and continues to do so, to our association and the genealogical research of our family. It seemed natural to acknowledge his incredible commitment. In 2026, Stéphane Kirouac, Nathalie Keroack and our special collaborators will determine the criteria for young people, both French and English speaking, to win the award, \$150. The launching is planned for the 2026-2027 school year.



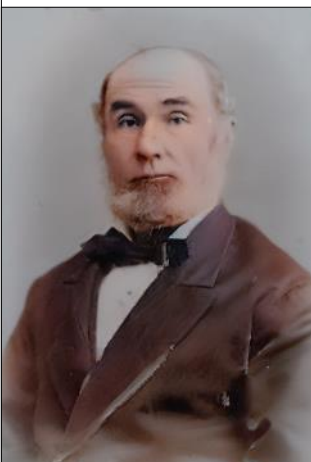
François Kirouac's constant presence at the KFA Board meetings

During 2025, we learned that François Kirouac had taken part in the KFA Board meetings since the very first one. Every one? Yes? Except one; he got the date mixed up but he had planned to be there.

Given this, at our last AGM, members present adopted the following resolution: IT IS RESOLVED: To amend the minutes of the 75th KFA meeting held on 26

October 1989 to include, among the persons present, the participation "in dynamic thinking" of Mr. François Kirouac; therefore declaring that he took part in all the regular Board meetings of the Kirouac Family Association, Inc., since the very first one to the 208th meeting. Thus, the Annual General Meeting of the Kirouac Family Association officially convey its congratulations to Mr. François Kirouac for his invaluable contribution to the organization and its members. We know we can count on his constant contribution.

CHEVALIER François Kirouac will be a theme of a Trésor in 2026



On 19 January 1826, at Saint-Pierre-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud, was born François Kirouac, who became a merchant, politician and Honorable Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. He is listed among our Illustrious Kirouacs¹.

Simply glancing at his biography, it is clear that the 200th anniversary of his birth

deserves to be celebrated. There is no doubt at all when looking at his descendants, starting with one of his grandchildren, Conrad, the famous Brother Marie-Victorin, and Conrad's sister, Adelcie, Mother Marie-des-Anges (in religious life, Marie-of-Angels) and the impact

his family has had in the world of commerce, business and politics in Quebec City and beyond. (look them up on the KFA Website). In 2026, the first issue of the Trésor will be dedicated to the Chevalier. We are looking for people who would like to collaborate by writing part of this issue, Le Trésor, number 150.

Le Trésor has already published a Special Edition but we would like some more personal life stories: to underline his impact as mayor and alderman? As a city benefactor? As a merchant? As a devout Catholic? We will contact some family members but, please, contact us to offer your help, your texts and your knowledge will be much appreciated. associationfamilleskirouac@gmail.com

See other documents concerning Le Chevalier, on the KFA website. Documents about the Chevalier are available mostly in French at the moment, on our website: <https://www.familleskirouac.com/chevalier-fran%C3%A7ois-kirouac>

Next Important Gatherings in 2026 and 2027

After much soul searching and looking back at the results of the last few years' gatherings, the Board members feel that we need to put our thinking caps on before launching into another large gathering. In spite of our attempts to innovate, the results of the last years show that interest and attendance are declining; thus the Board proposes:

Detroit was founded in 1791 by French explorers, and will celebrate its 325th Anniversary in 2026, Catherine Kirouac Robinson, a member of **RENDEZ-VOUS DÉTROT**¹, a committee celebrating Detroit's French heritage, is counting on a special Kirouac delegation to be part of the activities scheduled during the official celebration on 24-25-26 July 2026. She is planning a very visible Kirouac presence. Read the preview of these activities on page 24 in the present *Trésor*.

For those who would like to go to Detroit, please contact Cathy. It will be the main KFA activity for 2026. This follows the KFA Board members' decision to take a "thinking pause" and the choice for our annual gathering in 2026 but it will back in full force in 2027. Naturally, the 2026 AGM will be held in September somewhere in Quebec, in person and online.

In 2027, we want to celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the actual presence of Urbain-François Le Bihan in New-France. He most likely arrived in Autumn 1726 but the very first document found bearing his signature is dated 27 January 1727. And we think it would be a great occasion to twin this anniversary with the 350th anniversary of the foundation of L'Islet in 1677.

As mentioned before, Simon-Alexandre, son of Urbain-François,

married Geneviève Chalifour from L'Islet and their descendants now live all over North America. Of course this is a double proposal, a 300th, and a 350th anniversary need appropriate commemorations. So, in Summer 2027, in collaboration with L'Islet's celebration committee, we would like to hold a gathering in this historical village. No one could ever forget that we were over 700 participants in 1980! Perhaps you were one of them!

Then in Autumn 2027, we are thinking of a second RETURN TO THE SOURCES! How about travelling in the footsteps of Urbain-François in Brittany, and why not also follow Jack Kerouac trying to trace his origins in France. We will keep you informed, because we will need teamwork and assistance through some organizing committees.

¹ See page 23, the official invitation issued by the president of Rendez-vous Detroit.



Souvenir photo of the first **Return to the sources**, the journey that took place on 3-18 July 2000. Here are the 32 travellers at Limoëlou Manor, Jacques Cartier's home in Saint-Malo, as they were discovering Urbain-François Le Bihan's home country. (Photo: KFA collection)

A Really Great Family Reunion

Family of Albert Kirouac (1902-1997) and his two wives, Yvonne Laroche (1907-1936) and Irène Auger (1913-2012)



At long last!

It took a whole year to plan and organize this great family reunion!

Last 8-9-10 August 2025, on each day some 75 to 80 descendants of Albert, and his two wives, Yvonne and Irène, met together at Harrington in the Laurentians.

For years, the family used to meet on 31 December. Together, we saw the old year out and celebrated the coming of the new one, exchanging wishes, receiving the paternal blessing; then, after father's passing in 1997, it was the maternal blessing, followed by revelling, midnight feast, songs and dances.

However, after Mother's passing in 2010, these multi-generational gatherings came to an end.

Nonetheless, wanting so much to bring back these good moments with the whole family, two generous persons (Richard and H el ene) took on to organize this special reunion.

From the start, the Domaine  vasion at Harrington in the Laurentian, seemed the best place to do so. It was already well known from many family members because it has many cottages making it easy to house everyone around the beautiful Harrington lake besides offering a great number of activities. All we needed was favorable weather.

Our wish was 100% granted. We enjoyed three wonderful days of water sports: swimming, fishing, pontoon rides, pedalo, etc., young and not-so-young loved it.

Relatives visited each other walking from one cottage to the next

and to the great hall in the central pavilion that was the perfect place for the general exchanges we had been dreaming of for so long. In this large hall, we could also take all the time needed to watch the video prepared by Raymonde. What a pleasure to see the family grow and change over the years through her large photo collection. There was also a precious family book registering all names, dates of birth and marriages for the whole family starting with the parents: (Albert and Yvonne, and Albert and Ir ene) right down to the great-great-grandchildren. It was also possible for each family to bring it up to date.

On Saturday evening, we all gathered again in the hall for a spaghetti dinner to which everyone contributed. To start the evening's activities, I had prepared a raffle.

*The main articles to be won were: two copies of Fran ois Kirouac's book (in French) about **The Ancestor of the North-American Kirouacs, his wife and their sons**; there was also a copy of **Memory Babe** (French edition), by Gerald Nicosia; and a copy of **Fr ere Marie-Victorin, science, culture et nation**, chosen texts presented by Yves Gingras.*

For the family troubadours, musicians and singers, Louis Kirouac and his brother-in-law, Roger Plourde, led the ball, playing guitar and singing, and they got us all singing and dancing and moving to the rhythms of mainly well-known and loved Quebec artists.

On Sunday, when came the time to say goodbyes it was always with the same comment: we must do this again, and again. See you soon!

By Lucille, the eldest of this beautiful large family.

Rendez-vous Détroit
Celebration of the 325th anniversary of the founding of Détroit
24 to 26 July 2026

Special Invitation for the K/rouac Families from the President, Elizabeth Bourne-Nido

Cathy Kirouac Robinson¹, has been an integral part of *Rendez-vous Détroit* since its founding in 2017. As a board member from its inception, Cathy has worked to establish *Rendez-vous Détroit* as a leading nonprofit organization in promoting and educating the public about French-Canadian history and heritage in Michigan.

Rendez-vous Détroit was awarded the **2018 Community Heritage Medal** from the History Department of the University of Windsor for outstanding achievement in raising the profile of French-Canadian history and heritage in Ontario, Canada and Michigan.

With annual events offered throughout the year, *Rendez-vous Détroit* continues to celebrate the traditions, family ties and history that has been a part of French-Canadian culture in North America for over 400 years.

Détroit, Michigan was founded on 24 July 1701, by Frenchman Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac and a convoy of 100 French-Canadian men.

To celebrate Detroit's 325 birthday, *Rendez-vous Détroit* has a wonderful celebration weekend planned for July 24-25-26, 2026.

The celebration will be held at the **Fort Pontchartrain Hotel** in downtown Detroit, located on the very site of Cadillac's original fort on the banks of the Detroit River.

The weekend will include traditional French-Canadian music and dancing; presentations about early Detroit history; the history and future restoration plans for the French ancestral church, the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Détroit; a tour of the basilica; and the annual Detroit French History Cruise on the Detroit River.

Rendez-vous Détroit cordially invites the **Kirouac Family**

Association to join in the festivities of Detroit's 325th birthday celebration. More details and registration information will soon be available. Please consider participating in this very fun and historic celebration.

*Follow *Rendez-Vous Détroit* on Facebook

See: Rendezvousdetroit.org.

¹ Cathy Kirouac-Robinson was elected as a member of the AFK Board of Directors on September 5 in Cap-Rouge at the Annual General Meeting, see page 16.

² In 1700, Cadillac obtained Pontchartrain's approval to found a French colony, not a simple fort. He left Montreal on 5 June 1701 and reached the strait on 24 July, accompanied by about 100 people, including his lieutenant Tonty, two religious, 50 soldiers, and 50 settlers.

³ On the north shore, he erected Fort Pontchartrain, a prelude to Detroit. Later, the settlement expanded: in 1744 a mission on the south shore gave rise to the future city of Windsor.

Source : *The Canadian Encyclopedia*



Photo: John Cooper collection

Members of the *Rendez-vous Detroit* organizing committee, from left to right: John Cooper, Dennis Nido, Elizabeth Bourne-Nido and, far right, Catherine Kirouac-Robinson, secretary.

My cousin, Pope Leo XIV

by Mark Pattison

In a lengthy essay in the June 15 issue of the New York Times Magazine on the bloodlines of new Pope Leo XIV, Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. included this tidbit:

“Through one Canadian ancestor, Louis Boucher de Grandpre, who was born in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, the pope is related to numerous Canadian-derived distant cousins, including Pierre and Justin Trudeau, Angelina Jolie, Hillary Clinton, Justin Bieber, Jack Kerouac and Madonna.”

Well, Madonna, Justin Bieber and Angelina Jolie I could care less about. What quickened my pulse was the connection to Jack Kerouac.

Now, each one of us gets to ask this question: If we are related to Jack Kerouac, are we also related to Pope Leo?

The prospect of that is dizzying. How many people can say they are related to a pope? And how many of them live on this continent?

And if I'm one of them, and you're one of them, then how cool is that?

One might think it was enough that Pope Leo, nee Robert Prevost, was born in Chicago, Illinois, making him the first pope to hail from North America.

The pope was born in the Windy City's¹ South Side, 69 years ago. He's just 10 months older than me. But, as a baby boomer, it also exposed him to the same upheavals in both church and society that I went through.

The first and most immediate change was the Mass being celebrated not in Latin, but in the vernacular. I remember the date still: November 29, 1964, the First Sunday of Advent.

I had to relearn the people's responses to the priest's prayers in English than the Latin to which I'd grown accustomed by going to daily Mass at my Catholic grade school.

Other changes were less benign. The Catholic Church of my youth was an urban church. But in the United States, civil disturbances, disinvestment in cities, “white flight” to the suburbs, and the weakening grip of “ethnic” parishes made the church a suburban church.

Young Robert Prevost's childhood parish in Chicago was eventually closed by the Archdiocese of Chicago due to dwindling numbers of both parishioners and priests to serve them. The same happened to my childhood parish in Detroit, as well as the one I moved to as a young adult. Detroit had 114 parishes in early 1989; 25 years later, when a last-gasp effort was made

to lure Pope Francis to visit Detroit on his 2015 visit to the U.S.A., there were just 46 left.

Pope Leo and I share an affection for baseball. As a Detroiter, my team is the Detroit Tigers. Prevost grew up a fan of the Chicago White Sox.

In fact, mere days after being selected as pope, video of a young Father Prevost -- in civilian clothing -- was found of him attending a 2005 World Series game between the White Sox and the Houston Astros (the Sox won that game and swept the Series).

But Prevost did not restrict himself to the city limits of Chicago. While he was attracted to the priesthood from childhood, he did not become a diocesan priest but joined the Augustinian order. That meant college education and spiritual formation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where the Augustinians run Villanova University.

In time, he was ordained to the priesthood and ultimately assigned to minister in Peru. There, he was named the bishop of Chiclayo (the pronunciation of which sounds an awful lot like “Chicago”), serving as bishop there for nine years. So,

¹*Windy City's South Side-* The city of Chicago is nicknamed the Windy City, and the southern district where the Prevost family lived is still recognized for its residential suburbs, cultural institutions, and historical significance.

our new pope qualifies as both an American pope and a pan-American pope, given his ministry and his lineage.

He was summoned by Pope Francis to Rome in 2023 to head the Vatican Dicastery for Bishops², whose task it is to recommend bishops to be appointed by the pope. He had served in that capacity for a couple of years – including being elevated to the College of Cardinals – when Pope Francis died April 21, the day after Easter.

When the conclave began to choose a successor to Pope Francis, Cardinal Prevost was not likely high on many observers' lists. There's a saying at moments like this: "Enter the conclave as a pope, leave as a cardinal." It shows how the Lord works in mysterious ways. But the fact that the conclave settled on Cardinal Prevost in just two days speaks to what they wanted to see in a successor to Pope Francis.

From Gates' research, Pope Leo has not only French ancestry, but also Spanish and Italian heritage. Even within the North American continent, the new pontiff's lineage extends to Cuba, Haiti and Creole Louisiana.

This gives new meaning to the term "a man of the world."

Before he was elected, the new Holy Father used social media to advocate for immigrants. The Catholic Church holds that people have the right to both stay where they are, and to move.

That position raised the ire of some of the professional conservatives in the United States. In fact, one of the pope's older brothers is a hard-core "MAGA" type who said his famous sibling knows where he stands on today's hot-button issues, but acknowledged that he was going to have to "tone it down" on his own social media feeds.

In the early days of his papacy, Pope Leo called for the church to be united amid a wounded world.

He also issued cautions about the growth of artificial intelligence, saying that while it is "the product of exceptional human genius," it raises pressing questions, must never forget human dignity, and cannot interfere with the proper human and neurological development of young people and children.

In a nod to the pope's fandom of the White Sox, the Chicago Archdiocese hosted a gathering at the team's ballpark, with all 30,000 available tickets claimed, with Pope Leo delivering a message of love and peace to a youthful audience.

Early in his papacy, someone convinced him to autograph a baseball bat, and someone else talked him into wearing a black White Sox baseball cap with his all-white papal vestments.

Some Catholics are hopeful that the name he chose to exercise his papal office – Leo XIV – suggests a renewed emphasis on Catholic social teaching.

It was Pope Leo XIII who ushered in the era of Catholic social teaching with his 1893 encyclical "*Rerum Novarum*" ("Of New Things"), which said workers have a right to form labor unions and to bargain collectively for improved wages and working conditions.

When you read this, we will be mere months into Pope Leo's pontificate. But if Gates' genealogical research checks out, Pope Leo XIV may be the Association's most famous relative – more famous than Jack Kerouac and Brother Marie-Victorin combined!

² He succeeded Quebec Cardinal Marc Ouellet, who had just resigned.

If you are a descendant of Clémentine Bernier and Jean-Baptiste Kerouac, like Jack Kerouac, you share a common ancestor with Pope Leo XIV. See the table on the following page.

Source of information
content in the table:

**Perche-Québec Association
website
and
Ancestry.com**

Genealogical link between Jack Kerouac and Robert Francis Prevost, Pope Leo XIV



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