

Inside This Issue

- 2 **A Word From The President**
- 3 **YOUTH**
 - Standing on Their Shoulders
 - A Word From The President Continued
- 4 **YOUTH**
 - Meet the Animators!!
- 5 **COMMUNITY**
 - House of Kings and Queens
 - Announcement!!
- 6 **HISTORY**
 - The Railway in South-West Montreal
- 7 **LEISURE CLUB**
 - Spring into these Books!!!
 - Stay Tuned for these Movies!!!



Photo from Curiositysip: <http://curiositysip.com/spring/>

And That's a Wrap: The Final Farewell of the Standing on their Shoulders Project

By Standing on their Shoulders project

February 21, a very special day, marked the culmination of an extraordinary project called Standing on Their Shoulders. A little over one year ago this project was birthed, a team was assembled and a community was informed that their neighbourhood would be touched in a way like never before. The mission of the Standing on Their Shoulders project was to capture, highlight and preserve the history and contributions of Montreal's Black English-speaking community in the Little Burgundy district. This new and different approach was to be separate from past endeavors that focused solely on "jazz"

or "the railroad". This approach focused on a generation of people who first came to create the community of Little Burgundy during Canadian Confederation to find work on the railroad. We also set out to document the effects that would be carried through from generation to generation. Standing on Their Shoulders was all about capturing the history behind jazz legends and historical buildings still found in the community today. However, simply documenting the historical changes ourselves was not enough for this unique project. We intended to involve the community itself to highlight and preserve its history.

The project was divided into three phases. The first was about teaching the history to a new generation of young Black English-speaking youth in Little Burgundy. This was done through a series of workshops and walking tours with youth, along with the support of our partner organizations such as Desta Black Youth Network, Club Energy, Tyndale St. Georges, and Youth in Motion. The second part of the project focused on scouting out 20 youth who wanted to create their own videos capturing Little Burgundy's history through their own form of artistic interpretation. This phase also included connecting with the elders of

Continued on Page 3...

A Word From The President



BCRC Black Community Leadership Forum for June
16, 2016

By Dr. Clarence Bayne

does the latter better that we can.

The Black Community Forum was originally created in the early nineties by the "Table de Concertation" for the English Speaking Communities of Montreal in response to the expressed desire of those communities "to develop a cooperative planning process" as an engine for its development. Initially, it was intended to be a forum for "informing and involving the wider community in the policy initiatives being discussed at the Table with the three levels of Government." Protocols for the Forum were created over a six week period by some thirty community based organizations and presented and approved at the Val Morin conference in July, 1992. The Forum worked on an informal basis for five to seven years, at the end of which all of its sub-committees came under the coordinating functions of the BCRC. The BCRC inherited, hosted and provided administrative support to three sub-committees approved by the Table de Concertation: the Heath Committee, the Education/youth sector, and community economic development community committees. Arts and culture was subsumed into the community and Education function. The key agencies given the arts and cultural mandate were West Can Dance, Cultural Agency and the Black Theatre Workshop. Other agencies used cultural camps and programs for arts and culture. These agencies include the QBBE, the BCCQ Community Associations and the Black Studies Center Cultural program for mixed race families. The community economic development initiatives lost its central focus and community significance and became divided up between competing entities: CDN-BCA, YES Montreal, a research oriented collaboration between ICED Concordia and QBBE, the Black Studies Center, and the Government of Quebec Black Entrepreneurship Fund.

The 10th Black Community Leadership Forum retained a sense of strategic unity by holding meetings hosted by the BCRC. The Forum held its tenth meeting, on April 13, 2004, to discuss support for three community projects and to coordinate the collective community's (French and English) submissions to the City's Black Task Force, Chaired by Marciel Tremblay. As a result of Community initiatives coordinated by the BCRC, with the support of its Black French partners (Maison d'Haiti, La Ligue de Noirs, and the Black History Month Table), Marcel Tremblay, Associated Councillor for the Mayor, reported to the Forum and the Committee for the Economic Development of the Black Community that five Boroughs were committed to work to find solutions to "the problems identified by the Montreal Black communities, within the sphere of its jurisdiction, and to employment, dwelling, infrastructures and services; and play a leadership and support role for the proposed initiatives which decision are made by other levels of government." (Letter dated November 4, 2004, Cabinet du Maire et du Comté Executive, Hotel de Ville). These interventions led to the Yolande James Black Task Force, which reported in 2005.

Since then there has been significant changes in

Continued on Page 3...

The Black Community Leadership Forum will be hosting a working conference of its member organizations and partners on June 16, 2016. The Forum was approved by the BCRC Board of Directors at its Board meeting of December 7 2015. The Conference will be held at 6767 Cotes des Neiges and, very shortly, the agenda and invitations will be sent out to the BCRC's member organizations, collaborators and supporting agencies.

The purpose of the meeting is to bring together BCRC's associated organizations, partners and collaborators to revisit and update the Val Morin Agreement of 1992. The meeting will re-affirm the basic principles of cooperation and collaboration. For example, the organizations and its members' commitment to strengthening the vitality of the community by focusing on the health and vitality of its members. We will also continue to search for new strategies for education and development of the youth and future leadership, as well as strengthening and supporting families and enrichment of the lives of the aging subpopulation. Another topic will involve seeking greater community support for the arts, cultural and educational institutions central to the shaping of our identities, and improving the channels through which we contribute to the creation of a sustainable social and economic environment, a just, equitable and more inclusive and empathetic society.

Within that framework, the intent is to revisit the current evolved strategies of long term community development with a view to encourage the support and cooperation, of the community and between the community and partners. We also hope to expand the cross cultural communication and exchange of ideas and best practices, as well as replace intuitive and untested impulse decision making by a planning process that is information based, dynamic and responsive to change. We will also work to strengthen the existing relationships within our network by exploring more fully the use of communication and information technologies for knowledge transfer within the network of members and collaborators. And, finally, we hope to encourage and promote the development and effective implementation of strategies that benefit the total community. That is to say, we give preference to social economy engagement as opposed to purely individualistic private profit or self-serving activities. The market

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If you have any comments or requests please contact Ashlie Bienvenu at editor@brcmontreal.com





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the Little Burgundy community to gather as much oral and archival history as possible. This served to provide a pool of information for our youth, who would choose their own piece of Little Burgundy's history to interpret. Finally, the last phase focused on assisting the 20

young directors in creating their own three minute videos. With our partners from Great Things Studio and Concordia's CEREV, our youth learnt video directing techniques and got much more acquainted with the history of their video topics. On February 21, 2016, these very talented youth had their brilliant work displayed at our video launch. The videos were rich in history and displayed in excellent quality. Over 200 people came out to attend our event, including all three elected officials from the three levels of

government. Our youth were recognized and so were our elders for all of their hard work and dedication.

If you, or someone you know, would like to watch these videos then please stay tuned. They will be available online shortly. You can find out when and where on the BCRC website at www.BCRCmontreal.com.



...Continued from Page 2

Quebec, Montreal and Canada over the last twenty-five years. There have been changes in demographics, changes in political and social philosophies, institutional changes, economic changes, and infrastructural and environmental changes. Tracking of developments in the Black communities of Montreal has been done and records kept and reported by ICED Concordia, the BSC, and the McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social planning (the Evolution of the Black Community of Montreal), and the City and Provincial Governments Black Task Forces (2004 and 2005).

The Black communities, like all other cultural communities, both minority and non-minority, have had to adapt and react to these changes. In the Black community, new organizations have been created and some have evolved or disappeared. Things have changed since the sixties, partly because of the activism of the sixties and partly because of the dynamism of the interaction of forces and agencies in the environment at large. Now there are a higher proportion of Black youth in colleges and Universities that are Canadian born than was the case 26 years ago. Black education and employment capacity has kept pace with other visible and non-visible minorities. This has been substantiated by the McAndrew Report Commissioned by the QBBE (2004), the McGill Consortium studies, and the reviews of ICED, Concordia. But, while

employment income has improved there is still an unacceptably lower probability that a Black person will get a job compared with a white person of equivalent, or even lesser, education status. There is still a perception in the Black community that Blacks are more likely to be the victims of racial profiling. There are real hard questions being asked in the Black communities concerning the effectiveness of the strategies for community development undertaken by agencies in the community, as well as interventions by the various levels of Government. There is a feeling that the breakdown of the united voice that the BCCQ was able to create, in the seventies through to the late nineties, has been replaced by inter-organizational conflict as we return to competing for funds to sustain our presence in the society and the communities.

There is a body of opinion in the Black community that accuses young educated Blacks of abandoning the community; in other words, not giving back. This is frequently countered by the argument that the organizations need to change to reflect social and political changes, new needs and shift to new strategies that are now possible but were not twenty five years ago. Some young, educated Blacks feel that they are in positions where they should be invited to make decisions that impact entire sectors of the society, and that many of the Black community agencies still act as outsiders rather than as Nation influencers. For example, it is clear that the question of the education of the Black child can no longer be addressed simply as a matter of

removing racism from the English school system. Because, in Quebec, we have to deal with the larger question of linguistic preferences and the negative impact of the historic struggle between two European settler classes that have become embedded in the struggle for minority rights in Quebec and Canada. This has divided Caribbean cultural groups, which one might expect to be more united around rights and freedoms, along linguistic lines that are foreign to their historical origins and New World experiences and struggles. Also, there are those that believe that they can solve what is a general problem for all peoples in the society, as well as the health of the economy, by setting up a separate school system. Is it possible? And, if so, at what price? What are the real net social and direct, and indirect, economic benefits to the potential participating community members? Can the current models in the community at large be improved to meet our needs with greater networking among us? We hope to hear from experts across communities on this.

It is clear that we need to take a serious look at where we are and where we are going. But, that will require that we do not merely meet and speak with ourselves. There have been initiatives taken by others that must be considered and integrated into our leadership forum. One such situation is the work being done by

CQGN in the Education sector as a representative of the constitutional rights of the English-speaking cultural groups and Citizens of Canada in Quebec. Another situation has to do with health, community development, and most specifically art and culture and the recognition of our contributions to the cultural vitality of Quebec and Canada. We will be paying particular attention to the recommendations and implications of new policy initiatives being advanced for our moving forward by two recent community meetings: a community meeting called by the Round Table on December 4, 2015 and the Pan-Black Identities manifesto, approved at a recent Community meeting called by La Ligue des Noirs and accepted as guidelines by the Round Table Meeting of December 4, 2015.

We invite your feedback and comments.



Meet The Animators!!
The Standing on Their Shoulders Project!!



Sheron Edey (project director)-As I reflect on what I have experienced over the last year, I realize how important it is that we sit with our elders to hear what they experienced and how some of their contributions paved the way for all the following generations. The conversations need to continue...



Tenisha Valliant- I worked outreach for this amazing team and history project. I think this initiative is very needed and I can see it by the feedback we've been getting from inside the community and out!

Kai Thomas -It was a delight to work as a researcher for the BCRC as part of Standing on Their Shoulders team. The project took me beyond the office to obscure corners of universities and the private collections of elders in the community. It's my hope that the videos we have created will continue to be used as a resource to shed light on the vibrant black history of Little Burgundy.



**House of Kings and Queens:
A truly individualized program, tailored for each specific person**

By Ashlie Bienvenu; Interview of Shimmon Hutchinson

We, at the BCRC, would like to present our upcoming program: House of Kings and Queens. Due to an interview with the chief coordinator of the program, Shimmon Hutchinson, we now have an inside view of this wonderful, one-of-a-kind program. The "Kings and Queens" program seeks to explore a new avenue that has not been used by any past programs for "at-risk" youth. This is a truly individualized program, tailored for each specific person. As Mr. Hutchinson has stated, **"the strength of the program is the strength of the individual."**

Kings and Queens provides children with role models that are closer to their value system and community, as well as tailor these youth to become role models and mentors in their own community. In fact, Hutchinson said that, "the main objectives inside of the program are to build on a lot of the micro skills with kids to be able to help them affect change in their community." This will be done by giving the children and youth a sense of empowerment.

This program also goes well beyond the school system and plans to give aid to the families as well. A portion of the program will also go towards strengthening services and institutions. According to Hutchinson, "it's this whole concept that because the kids are improving community services through the acquisition of skills they have inside the group then it's improving the services that we use to recommend to the families, **so it's this very cyclical, strengthening pattern that we're hoping to create."**

The Kings and Queens will be a great benefit to the Montreal community. It would "increase connection to services, increase connection to schools, lower dropout rates, improve grades, improve the chances of youth continuing to graduate studies-post-graduate studies or Cegep." However, while it would be beneficial to the community, the most important aspect of the program is making a change with the

individual. According to Hutchinson, **"There's so many things that I think it will improve but I think it would really depend upon the individual, whose kind of telling me what they want, what they need."**

When asked where he saw this program going in the future Mr. Hutchinson declared that his long-term goals "would be if this was something that could be run in all of the schools, engaging as many organizations as it possibly can, **having everyone on board so as if we are almost creating like a common culture and a common ideology to be able to help children, I think that in itself would be so powerful, if everyone is working together."**

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Announcement!!

We would like to announce the beginning of a new advice column. Please e-mail us with any concerns or struggles that you have and we will do our best to advise you, with the help of our knowledgeable BCRC members and partner organizations.

Send any e-mails to Ashlie Bienvenu at editor@bcrcmontreal.com.



The Railway in South-West Montreal

By Ashlie Bienvenu; Edited by Dorothy Williams



The high-pitched whistles and the sounds of metal upon metal could be heard from every corner of Montreal's industrial South-West districts. In St. Henri, Little Burgundy, Point St. Charles, and Griffintown, transportation infrastructure played a key role in defining the character of the area. One portion of Montreal's infrastructure, the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific railways, were a direct cause of the emergence of the predominantly English-speaking Black community that came to characterize Little Burgundy.

As early as the 1880's many Black immigrants, coming from the United States, did not have many job opportunities in Montreal due to overt discrimination. One job opportunity they did have, however, was as railway porters. Black employees were not allowed to become waiters or to attain any other position above porter. The porters did not even get a salary at first, relying solely on their tips. It was tough. Unable to get employment elsewhere, they stuck close to the St. Antoine district. Sometimes called St. Henri or St. Cunegogne, the area, later known as Little Burgundy, became the heart of the English-speaking Black community simply due to its proximity to the railway tracks.⁽¹⁾ The strong railroad connection lasted for over 60 years in that neighborhood.

Railway porters were put in charge of making beds in their cars, cleaning shoes that were left out, and cleaning their respective rail cars. They were always supposed to present themselves as clean and spotless and trustworthy so that passengers could feel comfortable leaving their valuables and children under their care when in the dining car. Their work, was laded with racialized expectations and behaviours. They could not defend themselves against demeaning insults, accusations or slurs from the public or from their bosses.

Black porters were a hardy breed. For, they were required to work hundreds of hours a month or go



thousands of miles before they were given their pay, which amounted to much less than the white men's salary. They would also have to endure tough conditions while on long trips, working for five or more days and only allowed three hours of sleep a day with layovers of two days.⁽²⁾

The men wanted something better. Starting in the late 1880s, they established unions such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Order of Sleeping Car Porters. These were segregated labour collectives because they were unable to join the company sanctioned unions. Nonetheless, the men who joined,⁽³⁾ agitated to improve the working conditions and to get bargaining recognition.⁽⁴⁾ They eventually did create labour change in the city. Railway unions became the first in Canada to desegregate.

These unions also had an impact on other social activist organizations in Montreal. One of these organizations was the Union United Church, which started as a church for the porters and their families in 1907. Therefore, the very make-up of the Church came to be to give support for the families of the porters who were left on their own for days at a time. In fact, after the First World War, "the congregation stabilized and grew. Union Church became a catalyst for social action and a resource for a host of new organizations growing out of Union."⁽⁵⁾

Therefore, the railways have had a great impact on the landscape as well as the history of social activism within the Montreal Black community. It has shaped the character of the area, known today as Little Burgundy, due to its close proximity to the rail lines that run parallel to the Lachine Canal. It has also shaped the nature of unions and social activist groups within the community, such as Union United Church and unions for employment rights.

(1) Post-Industrial Montreal, "Canal: Walking the Post-Industrial Lachine Canal," Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, Concordia University, audio-walk, 33:55-38:30. <http://postindustrialmontreal.ca/audiowalks/canal>.

(2) "A Porter's Pride," *The Hamilton Spectator*, December 4, 2007, accessed February 22, 2015, <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2108982-a-porter-s-pride/>.

(3) "Key Historic Events," Government of Canada, accessed February 22, 2015, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/black/history.asp>.

(4) "A Porter's Pride."

(5) "Our History," Union United Church, accessed February 22, 2015, <http://www.unionunitedchurchmtl.ca/history.htm>.



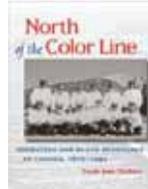
Spring Into These Books!!!



Kameleon Man, By Kim Barry Brunhuber.

High fashion, higher stakes, sex, glamour, and great clothes, Stacey Schmidt gets a taste of all these when he's suddenly propelled from suburban model hell into the garment jungle of today's Toronto. Stacey's part black, part white, and apparently on a fast track to fame, fortune, and all the women he could ever want, though at times it seems as if he's standing still. But does he really want the glitz?

--Excerpt from amazon.ca



North of the Colour Line: Migration and Black Resistance in Canada, 1870-1955, By Sarah-Jane Mathieu.

North of the Color Line examines life in Canada for the estimated 5,000 blacks, both African Americans and West Indians, who immigrated to Canada after the end of Reconstruction in the United States. Through the experiences of black railway workers and their union, the Order of Sleeping Car Porters, Sarah-Jane Mathieu connects social, political, labor, immigration, and black diaspora history during the Jim Crow era.

--Excerpt from amazon.ca

These books can be found at the Atwater Library's Black Collection.

Stay Tuned For These Movies!!!



Star Wars: The Force Awakens (2015). Cast: Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac.

Three decades after the defeat of the Galactic Empire, a new threat arises. The First Order attempts to rule the galaxy and only a ragtag group of heroes can stop them, along with the help of the Resistance.

--Excerpt from IMDb



The Hateful Eight (2015). Cast: Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh.

In the dead of a Wyoming winter, a bounty hunter and his prisoner find shelter in a cabin currently inhabited by a collection of nefarious characters.

--Excerpt from IMDb

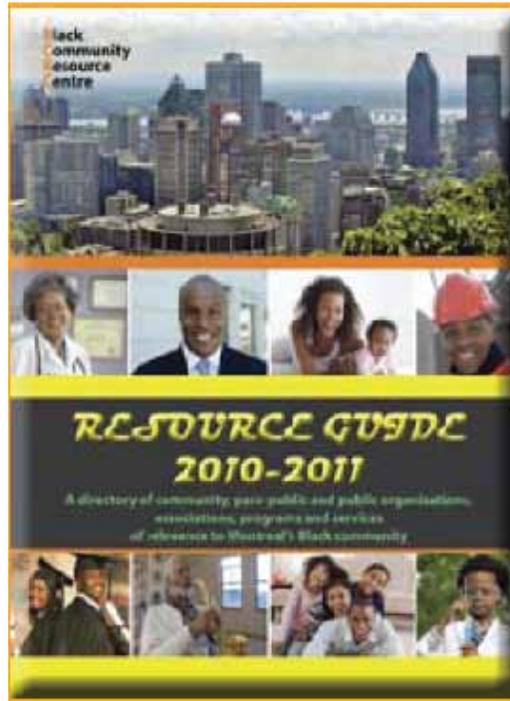


Furious 7 (2015). Cast: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Tyrese Gibson, Ludacris.

Deckard Shaw seeks revenge against Dominic Toretto and his family for his comatose brother.

--Excerpt from IMDb





Our Resource Guide highlights a variety of non-profit, public and para-public organizations serving the English-speaking Black community

The Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC) is an organization that strengthens community capacity by providing professional support to organizations and individuals in need. Our team is committed to assisting visible-minority youth rekindle their dreams and achieve their full potential.

Our Funders:

- ◆ Patrimoine canadien /Canadian Heritage, Official Languages
- ◆ Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal

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