



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
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MINUTES
of the meeting
of the
BIMETALLIC QUESTION
October 6, 2005

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on:
Thursday, December 1, at 6:30 p.m. at:

The Westmount Public Library
(Westmount Room)
4574 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec

The Quiz at the next meeting

“The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot”

Minutes of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, October 6th, 2005 at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, Quebec.

Present: Carol Abramson, Maureen Anderson, Rachel Alkallay, Stanley Baker, Paul Billette, Richard Buché, Emmanuel Buche, David Dowse, David Kellett, Elliott Newman, Arlene Scher.

Regrets: Jack Anderson, Mac Belfer (we wish you a speedy recovery), Patrick Campbell, Wilfrid de Freitas, Kathryn Radford, Nancy Walkling

In Memoriam

Colin Semel

May 31, 1932 – October 24, 2005

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Colin Semel, a dear friend, staunch ally, and valued and entertaining member of our society. A veteran of Unity Theatre of his native London, England, as well as the Montreal Welsh Choir and the Montreal West Operatic Society, Colin's personal reminiscences and love and expression of performance, music, and humour brought warmth and camaraderie to our meetings and particularly to our annual banquets.

We will miss him.

CALL TO ORDER:

Our Sovereign Paul Billette called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS AND GENTLE TRANSACTION:

1) **Annual Banquet.**

Paul Billette introduced the options facing us for the date and venue of our annual banquet. We will attempt to contact Josh Freed, local popular newspaper columnist and bon vivant, to appear as our guest speaker. If he is unavailable, we will invite a Westmount resident who is an expert on art fraud.

Richard Buche offered to contact the Vieux Port restaurant on St. Paul Street in Old Montreal, the scene of several salubrious Bimetallic banquets of the past.

Similarly, Rachel Alkallay presented the Montefiore Club on Guy Street, the location of a most enjoyable banquet in 2004.

The contrast between the two venues is dramatic, making a decision challenging. The Vieux Port exudes a Québécois je ne sais quoi, with its stonework, Canadiana furnishings, dim lighting, and warm ambiance. By contrast, the Montefiore Club offers high ceilings, more space, a broadly illuminated dining area, more privacy, and a more upscale menu and presentation at a slightly higher price.

Both facilities offer a cash bar service.

We will be voting on our preference at our December meeting.

The proposed Montefiore menu is:

Hors d'oeuvres: Montefiore Chips – Smoked Salmon on Black Bread – Endives & Herb Cheese – Cocktail Wieners – Purses with Wild Mushrooms.

Carrot & ginger soup.

Choice of: Pan seared stripebass, Hoi sin sauce OR Roast Striploin of Beef OR Chicken Scaloppini with Marsala.

Potato du Jour, two seasonal vegetables

Dessert: Double Chocolate Cake OR Lemon Meringue Pie OR Ice Cream.

Coffee & Tea

Montefiore Cookies & Squares

Price: \$43.00, all incl.

The proposed Vieux Port menu is:

Canapes: Mini bruschettas – seafood delights on grilled bread – smoked salmon with cream cheese on Ritz crackers – shrimp provençale – mini pizzas – chicken bites – beef and pork satehs – snails au gratin on wild mushrooms.

Soup: Cream of chicken Royale

House salad with Mediterranean perfumed dressing.

Choice of: Sirloin steak NY cut (Angus AAA+ pride) charcoal grilled and served with a baked potato, fresh vegetables and 3-peppercorn, cognac and red wine sauce OR Striped bass fillet oven baked and served with rice, fresh vegetables and meunière sauce OR grilled oregano chicken breast served with mashed potato, fresh vegetables and Portobello mushroom sauce.

Dessert: Sweet table with assorted fruits and desserts: seasonal fruits, tiramisu, chocolate mousse, pecan pie, lemon meringue pie, crème brulée, cheesecake, Baklava, flan, etc.

(Vieux Port menu, con't)

Coffee or tea, complimentary punch.

Salle Bonsecours available with fireplace and space for cocktail.

Price: \$39.00, all incl.

Be sure to attend the December meeting and vote for your choice of banquet venue and to confirm the proposed time, third Saturday evening in January. No advance or proxy voting.

2) **Costumes**

We encourage everyone to wear a Sherlockian or Victorian-inspired costume for the annual banquet. Reasonable facsimiles are welcome.

Rachel informed us she has been struggling to make a cape. A cape can basically be a large, square-cut piece of fabric with a piece or string at two adjacent corners. A square is a quadrilateral (a four-sided figure) in which all sides are the same length. We are confident that once armed with this information, Rachel's struggle will be lessened and her road to success will be paved with our support. We are looking forward to her cape and we will be impressed by the results.

3) Paul Billette suggested we hold a drawing for delivering the toasts of the evening.

Toast presenters were:

David Dowse	-	to The Master
Rachel Alkallay	-	to Watson
Richard Buche	-	to Mrs. Hudson
Elliott Newman	-	to The Woman
Arlene Scher	-	to The Society

4. **Show and Tell.**

- a) Richard Buche presented DVDs of Sherlock Holmes stories. They had Greek subtitles and could only be played on a portable DVD player.
- b) David Kellett has repeated his generous offer to lend us VHS tapes on Sherlock Holmes, the title roles being performed by Jeremy Brett and Basil Rathbone. These do not have Greek subtitles and can be played on a stationary DVD player.
- c) We discussed having a movie night in which we would watch some of the Sherlock Holmes videos. We decided that Maureen would bring us Victorian snacks. She had not yet arrived at the meeting.
- d) Stanley Baker informed us that Mac Belfer had fallen off his bicycle and broken his hip. We agreed to send him a get-well card and extend our best wishes for a speedy recovery.
- e) Paul Billette reported that the *Westmount Examiner* had published an article based its reporter's visit to our previous meeting.
- f) Paul read us a mini-mystery from his book: *Murder at the Chessboard*. Rachel solved the mystery immediately.
- g) We had a general discussion on the health of Colin Semel and how our society has been assisting him throughout his illness. We will devote more time and space to a suitable tribute to Colin in the near future.
- h) Rachel asked us to help solve her real-life mystery involving the theft of a laptop computer:
 - This is a true case.
 - The victim of the theft has an irregular schedule.
 - The proposed Sherlockian cape has nothing to do with this case.
 - She returns to her apartment, discovers she has been robbed.
 - All that is missing is a laptop computer, left on a table.
 - Drawers have been opened, nothing touched.
 - The windows don't appear to have been used to gain entry.
 - Boxes were piled outside her windows on the ground floor, too far down to be of use, even by a very tall basketball player.
 - Police believe the thief used a door key.
 - The police investigator came back two weeks later and before asking any questions, was told by a 12-year-old girl who lives with the concierge, "I was with John (the concierge) that day."

Whodunnit? Do we have enough information? Do we send John back to concierge school? Can we get the kid to spill the beans?

- i) Several members helpfully pointed out previous newsletters with inaccuracies too numerous to mention. We thank all those who spent the time to find them and point them out. Please watch this and future newsletters for well-planted inaccuracies. You guys are good! And we will continue to challenge you!
- j) It is with some trepidation that this newsletter scribe will now attempt to clarify the mystery of the Holmes twins.
It would appear that when we were honoring BRUCE Holmes at CLYDE'S in Pointe Claire Village on May 9, 2005, also present was TOM Holmes, not a relative of BRUCE. We forgot to ask, however, if either Tom or Bruce were related to Clyde, or if there is a Clyde. We sincerely regret this omission of specifying more about Clyde, and any inconvenience to all concerned and their families. We will not mention this again, however compelling it may be.

5. **The Quiz.**

Winners of the quiz based on "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott," presented by Carol Abramson, were:

Rank	Name	Score
1.	David Kellett	84
2.	David Dowse	55½
3.	Stanley Baker	53½

- 6. Emmanuel Busche successfully sold a number of Caramilk bars for a fund-raising project.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR OUR NEXT MEETING

- 1. Show up and vote for your choice of restaurant for our 2006 banquet.
- 2. Help us remember COLIN SEMEL. Bring in memorabilia, anecdotes, poems, passages, photos, etc. We will be compiling a memorial tribute to Colin and we welcome and need your support!

Our dear friends, you would confer a great favour upon us by joining us at the next meeting of "THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION" which is being held on Thursday, December 1st, 2005, at 6:30 p.m.

For the latest society news or updates on our history, please go to www.bimetallicquestion.org

Dear Members,

Our good friend and long-standing member Colin Semel died peacefully on Monday, October 24. When it became evident that Colin could no longer look after himself, with assistance from the CLSC and Colin's friends, arrangements were made to move him into the Maison Paternelle residential care home where he resided until June. His health deteriorated so rapidly that he was admitted to the Jewish General Hospital and became a resident patient in September.

With no one to visit him (he was estranged from his wife and son) some members of our Society agreed on a roster so that Colin would have a visit from someone every day, and he seemed to enjoy this. He liked to talk about Chelsea Football club in London, reminisce about old times, and sing traditional Jewish songs and popular numbers from the Gilbert & Sullivan operettas. He had been an active member of two choral groups, as well as the choir from his synagogue, some of the congregation of which also visited him regularly.

Several of our members attended his graveside funeral on October 28, at the Bagg Street Synagogue cemetery, and Patrick Campbell, Rachel Alkallay, Richard Buche, Stanley Baker and Judy Knight each said a few words on this occasion.

Below we reproduce the announcement which our Society placed in The Gazette on Saturday, October 29, 2005.



Published in the Montreal Gazette Saturday, October 29, 2005

Obituary

COLIN SEMEL

"THE GALLOPING MAJOR"

Our friend Colin Semel died on October 24, at the age of seventy-three. He was, at heart, a Thespian and he has now gone to the ultimate green-room, for a well deserved rest. An active former member of the Montreal West Operatic Society and the Montreal Welsh Male Choir, he also sang in his synagogue choir. But we of the Bimetallic Question, The Sherlock Holmes Society of Montreal, will remember him fondly as The Galloping Major, in whose persona Colin often entertained us at our annual dinner, resplendent in high collar, waistcoat and handle-bar moustache. Goodbye dear friend, we will miss you.

Colin Semel: born in England 1932, died in Montreal 2005.