Message From The President

Dear Members:

Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of our Newsletter. Please join me in congratulating our new editors Carolina Avaria and Korey Rorison for doing an outstanding job.

Well, so much has happened since I last wrote to you in our last newsletter.

This past year, the National Board has been very busy with many projects, meetings and conference calls as we developed and finally delivered solid material to help promote and manage Les Clefs d’Or Canada.

Last fall we had our first historic board meeting in Halifax. Assisted by Ivan Boyd and Roger Poirier, we had a wonderful weekend of productive meetings and a chance to meet all the wonderful concierges of the Maritimes. It was such a pleasure to meet everyone and we look forward to so much more to come from our new friends on the Eastern coast.

From there, it was on to the very busy planning of the 15th Pan American Congress, which was held in my hometown of Vancouver from April 18th to 22nd. I wish to thank the congress board of Bertine Hage (Four Seasons Hotel), Miguel Knudson (Sutton Place Hotel), Sheron Empey (Four Seasons Hotel), Tracy Campbell (Hotel Vancouver) and the whole BC Region of Les Clefs d’Or who work endlessly on what turned out to be an outstanding and most successful congress. The amount of praise and thank yous I have received have been overwhelming and this is due to the hard work and diligence of all the members that worked so hard to make it happen. Bravo to all, we did it!!

You will have the opportunity to read in this edition of the newsletter plenty of stories about the congress, along with all the regional updates and concierge profiles. I hope you will share this information with your colleagues and your General Managers to give them an idea of how committed we all are to Les Clefs d’Or Canada.

I wish everyone a very fruitful and successful summer and if anyone has any questions please do not hesitate to contact myself or any of the board members as we would be more than happy to assist in any way possible.

In Service through Friendship,

Geoffrey Argue
President, Les Clefs d’Or Canada
Welcome to Our Newsletter!

Message From The Editors

Every time I take on a new project with Les Clefs d’Or, there is inevitably a certain amount of personal head shaking: “Oh dear, when will I find the time to do it?”, and then… I start working on whatever it is, and I realize how lucky I am to be able to develop yet another talent and aspect of my curiosity. Such was the case with Canad@ News. Yes, it is undeniably a lot of work, but what a pleasure to collaborate with my dear friend Korey and create a document that visibly links us all together demonstrating Canada as a strong and vibrant section!

It has been a year since our last newsletter and in one year a LOT has happened in our country. Be prepared to sit back and enjoy 14 pages filled with Les Clefs d’Or information. We encourage you to print it and hand-deliver it to your General Managers - it’s time to show off a little. While I talk about printing it, (and showing off), did you notice how easy it was to download the document and how great the photos look? Well, to that we owe a great thank you to Korey’s ingenious computer shenanigans! The day we both realized that he had figured out how to make it easier for all of us to view it, there were loud “Yahooos” heard in both Toronto and Niagara.

Aside from the incredible continued actions and developments you will read about across all six existing regions, the most exciting news is coming from the far East where a group of seven energetic Les Clefs d’Or members, (six members and one affiliate), are presently working together under the name of the Atlantic Concierge Association in order to develop a 7th region in our country. It has been a long road for them but they have never lost their focus and dedication as they near their goal – in fact six of them were proudly welcomed with a standing ovation at the Canadian Annual General Assembly in Vancouver. What a great moment that was - bravo to all of you! You will read much more about them in the fall edition.

Somebody taught me that there is nothing that makes a person feel better than having the opportunity to speak about themselves. Well on that note, I hope this newsletter brings you a smile and happiness as it truly is about YOU and a group of your fine friends.

Have a pleasant read, and a wonderful day.

In Service Through Friendship.

Carolina Avaria
Co-Editor, Les Clefs d’Or Canad@ News

“[It is exciting working with Carolina on the Les Clefs d’Or Canad@ Newsletter; I feel like Jimmy Olsen from the Daily Planet. Or is it Clark Kent?”

~ Korey ~
Dear colleagues and friends across Canada,

It is hard to believe that this time last year I was elected your National Vice President. The National Board has been very active to ensure our organization continues to grow and prosper.

It was a benefit to have Carolina Avaria, National Secretary, with me in Toronto as we could work closely together in creating and executing these following projects: The Public Relations Kit (thank-you to Kevin Argue, for inviting me to be an observer at the International Presidents closed meeting and the Directors Zone meeting. It was a great opportunity to engage with the members from 39 countries around the world. I was also proud to present in the General Assembly that Toronto will be hosting the International Congress in 2011.

I would like to thank the Vancouver Committee for hosting a successful Congress in April and ensuring almost 400 delegates had a taste of Canadian hospitality!

I look forward this year to meeting new members and re-uniting with old friends!

Vive Les Clefs d’Or!
In Service through Friendship!

Toni Daoud
Sutton Place Toronto
Vice President, Les Clefs d’Or Canada

Dear colleagues and friends across Canada,

In January, I once again had the opportunity to attend the International UCIH Congress when I traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark. I would like to thank our President, Geoff Argue, for inviting me to be an observer at the International Presidents closed meeting and the Directors Zone meeting. It was a great opportunity to engage with the members from 39 countries around the world. I was also proud to present in the General Assembly that Toronto will be hosting the International Congress in 2011.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to Hugo Legrand, Director of the Montreal Region and Anne McKenna, Director of the Quebec & Charlevoix Region, for their continued communication with Roger Poirier of the Delta Beausejour in Moncton. Not only did they arrange the board meeting, but also opened the doors for our East Coast Members.

In the next few months my goals will be to continue to feel honored to represent you as your National Secretary. The National Board has been actively focused on laying down the ground work for a better future for Les Clefs d’Or Canada. We created a proper Public Relations kit to be used as we gather momentum towards our upcoming International Congress in Toronto, created a structured recognition program for our members, which includes having the President of Les Clefs d’Or Canada send a letter of acknowledgement to our General Managers, and set up a standard New Candidates program that clearly outlines the expected contributions of all future members.

The Board has also been carefully monitoring and supporting the growth of our membership particularly on the Eastern Coast, where five new keys were handed out last fall. This of course was an absolute dream come true for the new members and for all of us who are looking forward to having Halifax become a new region - uniting us all from coast to coast! We are ever so close to reaching that goal, and I for one congratulate the endless efforts of Roger Poirier for keeping the torch burning in the distance.

The recent incredible Vancouver Congress gave the Board another chance to get together and talk about upcoming projects. One of our main decisions was to request that the national survey be discussed in all regions, allowing all full members an opportunity to have input on upcoming improvements. Once business was concluded at the congress, we all had the pleasure of sharing an exceptionally good time rewarding the phenomenal efforts of the organizing committee. Congratulations to the BC Region, you totally nailed it! It was an amazing congress, which you should all feel very proud of.

In the next few months I would like to thank our President, Geoff Argue, for inviting me to be an observer at the International Presidents closed meeting and the Directors Zone meeting. It was a great opportunity to engage with the members from 39 countries around the world. I was also proud to present in the General Assembly that Toronto will be hosting the International Congress in 2011.

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Vive Les Clefs d’Or!
In Service through Friendship!

Toni Daoud
Sutton Place Toronto
Vice President, Les Clefs d’Or Canada

The Mission of the Treasurer’s Network is to control efficiently the financial resources of Les Clefs d’Or Canada in order to give us the possibility to become a better organization.

The main goal of each treasurer is to control and manage efficiently the budget of his or her region for the benefit of all members.

As a team, we can achieve it!

Alain Larouche
Hotel de la Montagne
Treasurer, Les Clefs d’Or Canada

LES CLEFS D’OR CANADA
Treasurer’s Network
Soaring from Sea to Summit - There Ain’t No Mountain High Enough!

Dear friends and colleagues,

More than two years in the planning, the Pan American Congress was an incredible success! With snow at sea level and sun at the summit this congress provided scenic experiences few people have been fortunate to enjoy. Interperse this with a day of thoughtful, entertaining and insightful education designed to enhance both your work performance and experience; networking experiences within our concierge community and our individual hotel chains and AGMs to determine future goals of Les Clefs d’Or Canada; this congress had it ALL!

From one success to another – less than three weeks after the congress we, in partnership with Tourism Vancouver, hosted the 8th Annual Vancouver’s Tourism Showcase at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. Once again, it was a sell-out with over 80 exhibitors who shared their information with hospitality employees from across the tourism industry there to learn about the many attractions, events and activities offered in our incredible city. This tradeshow is our main source of charitable fundraising and this year we anticipate donating over $12,000 to support both social and arts charities within our community as well as provide educational bursaries to individuals studying in the hospitality field.

With these two events now successfully behind us and the cruise ship season in full swing, we are now focusing our energy on servicing our guests. Numerous concierge events have been organized throughout the last half of May, all of June and into July which will allow us to learn about new events, activities and attractions available in the city. In addition to the demands of our work and personal lives I am always amazed how we are able to fit these into our busy schedules. It is this passion and dedication that make me so proud to be a member of Les Clefs d’Or.

I wish everyone a wonderful, relaxing summer shared with family and friends.

Sharon Empey
Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver
Director – British Columbia Region

Travelling with Taste and In Style on Vancouver Island

Hosting many of our friends at the Pan American Congress was a great pleasure for all of us. We loved showing everyone our “spectacular by nature” places that we call home. After the congress came time to relax and reflect and to make this transition more exciting, our Victoria colleagues invited us to their piece of paradise and held a meeting on Vancouver Island. It turned out to be a classical trip to what Holly Steil calls “The Concierge Land”.

We started our trip in Vancouver, paying respect to what we learned during the congress and feasting on some prunes to boost our brain performance. After a calm ferry ride we met with our Victoria friends. They took us to Cowichan, an area well known for its artisan studios, quaint boutiques and farm fresh produce. Here we began a savoury excursion with our guide Kathy, an owner of “Travel with Taste”.

Through town we sampled some fantastic artisan breads and cheeses, got excited about home made yogurts, stocked up on cookies, tasted apple strudel (that any Austrian grandma would be proud of) and savoured the views of the Cowichan Valley. This area is one of BC’s fastest growing wine producers and on our tour, we were treated to a glass of blackberry cooler at Cherry Point Vineyards. Later, we were invited to a special excursion of Hillary Cheese Farms where they produce a unique line of cheeses inspired by local wines and beers. Our day was filled with tasty treats however, meeting all these wonderful people, is really what made the trip memorable.

After our busy afternoon, we traveled to the Aerie Resort & Spa, who graciously hosted us overnight. The Aerie is set 1,300 feet above the Pacific Ocean with spectacular views of the Sanisch Inlets, Victoria, San Juan Islands and Olympic Mountain Range in Washington State. We enjoyed a fabulous five-course dinner as the sun was setting.

The next morning we were welcomed by presenters from local attractions based in the area. We held our regular monthly meeting but with an added touch - a hand massage courtesy of the Aerie Spa! And finally, after a picturesque ferry ride across Horseshoe Bay on our way back to Vancouver, we stopped in at the local restaurant Coast, where we experienced yet more great food, imaginative cocktails and fun company.

At the end of day, our Whistler crew drove off into the sunset and as we admired the views we realized how spectacular our lives are - spectacular by nature and by our concierge profession.

Hana Lynn
Four Seasons Resort Whistler

Behind the Keys: Stéphane Mouttet

One of the first things you will notice when you approach the lobby of the Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel is the very tall engaging gentleman behind the Concierge Desk. He is our Chef Concierge, Stéphane Mouttet, who is also the current Secretary of Les Clefs d’Or, BC Region.

Having spent his childhood and youth in Grenoble, France and his adult life in Canada, Stéphane is the perfect embodiment of the “old world meets the new world”. While he possesses the easy charm and warmth of North American hospitality, he was trained in the true traditional European sensibilities.

Stéphane Mouttet

It was an article about Chantal Leroux, the first female concierge in Paris that had intrigued and inspired Stéphane to the concierge profession. After researching on how to embark on this new career goal, Stéphane enrolled in the renowned International Concierge Institute (“ICI”) in Paris and apprenticed at 5 Star properties, such as Hotel George V. Following graduation, Stéphane landed his first concierge job at the Gloucester Hotel in London. However, this experience was cut short due to the mandatory conscription requirement in France and Stéphane had to resign from Gloucester Hotel a year later.

After completing his military service, Stéphane decided to return to his birthplace – Canada, to find his roots. He landed in Vancouver in the spring of 1991 and immediately got a job as a concierge at the Four Seasons Vancouver. In 1995, Stéphane transferred to the Four Seasons Yorkville as Assistant Chef Concierge. However, missing the mild weather, Stéphane returned to beautiful Vancouver a year later and this time took the position as Assistant Chef Concierge at the Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel and was promoted to Chef Concierge in 2007.

Having almost two decades of concierge experience under his belt, I asked Stéphane what was the most memorable moment of his career. I thought it might be serving the Aga Khan, or taking care of some impossible task, but his answer came as a surprise. For Stéphane, he will always remember a day in the lobby at Gloucester Hotel, a little boy was checking-out with his parents. Stéphane had helped them on the previous day and when the little boy saw Stéphane, he recognized him and gave him a big wave and the sweetest smile. Freshly out of concierge school and in his brand new uniform, Stéphane discovered the pleasure of service and found his calling.

Shelley Hayashi
Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel
Greetings from Alberta,

It has been a great year since our last newsletter and we are excited to report that Alberta is still here and yes, our small group is still growing. Since our last newsletter we have had many changes in our region and I hope to fill you in on them as well as the exciting future we see for Alberta.

First off, I wanted to start by personally thanking Mark Schaal for his work and leadership as our Vice-Director. Mark was given a great opportunity at his hotel to go in a different direction and we wish him all the best success in the future as he takes on this exciting new chapter in his life.

Last September we had a very successful fundraiser for the Terry Fox Run as we were able to raise close to $1500. This means that each member raised about $150 each. Everyone worked very hard to raise money for this event. Lynn and I even drove in from Banff to run with other members at the Calgary run and a great time was had by all. This past year Alberta also donated $500 to the Canadian Cancer Society on behalf of Al Enders. Al Enders was the owner of Calgary's largest taxi and limousine service and a long time supporter of Les Clefs d'Or. He passed away from cancer last summer. He was our first Honorary Member for Alberta and he will be missed.

Currently Alberta is hard at work organizing our 8th Annual Golden Keys Invitational, definitely one of Canada's premier golfing events. We have again partnered with The Bow Valley Victim Services and have decided to stay committed to working with them in our future golf tournaments.

Well, last year I said that we would have more members from Alberta at the next Congress, and we did. It was very exciting to have Alberta represented by one-third of our membership. Attendees were Lynn Banford, The Fairmont Banff Springs; Don Bowden, Delta Lodge at Kananaskis; Jill Grundy, The Fairmont Palliser; Dallen Flexhaug, Hotel Arts and of course, myself. Both Lynn and I were able to have our spouses attend (James and Laura) and they of course had a great time and they say "hi" to all of the people that they met. Again a massive thank you to the Vancouver organizing committee, they did a fantastic job organizing this Pan American and making it very successful. They have set the bar high for all future Congresses (like next year’s, oh boy!)

Speaking of Congresses, what is everybody doing next year April 18th to 21st, no need to think too hard. You are all coming to Calgary, and to borrow a tagline from a well known local establishment… it will be "the most fun you’ll have with your boots on". By the end of summer you will start to hear lots of exciting news from Alberta regarding next years Congress.

As a region we continue to focus on growing our membership, educational component, and working with new tourism partners. We have fantastic concierges currently working towards their apprentice membership and we look forward to celebrating their successes with them. As we continue to grow it will be a great asset in offering great service to our guests. We look forward to seeing you all next year… and if you were at the Vancouver Congress remember to practice how to Ya-hoo! (and no Alain, you cannot say yee-haw) Till then all the best!

In service through friendship,

Don Mooney
Fairmont Banff Springs
Director—Alberta Region

Aaron Sands is one of those individuals who are always looking for a challenge. He can always be found helping his team provide exceptional service for their guests no matter how hard or simple the request might be. Aaron has called the Bow Valley area his home since 1997 and has worked at The Rimrock Resort for a total of six years. During this time he had the opportunity to work his way up from guest services to his current role as Chef Concierge.

When Aaron is not at the Rimrock assisting his guests, he is busy creating his own adventures which include his love of travel, finding the best powder for skiing, golfing, and hiking in the summer. Aaron’s passion for travel has taken him to many exotic countries where he has been able to immerse himself in the local cultures and customs and is able to speak the common phrases of six different languages. Aaron’s travels have helped shape him into the person that he is today. He feels that the challenges he faced as he visited many undeveloped countries have helped him to see the world in a different perspective, making it easy for him to empathize with his guests and to be able to know what they are truly looking for.

Aaron was excited this last December as he received his first key and became an Apprentice member of Les Clefs d'Or Canada. The Alberta Region is thrilled to have him join us and look forward to supporting his development as a Full Member.

“In Service through Friendship”
Dear Friends,

As the Regional Director of Ontario it is an honor to report to you the highlights of what we have accomplished together over the last six months.

Once again, we completed the year with a very successful annual holiday party where we invited our General Managers to celebrate our 2007 activities. At this event, we were graciously hosted by Chef Massimo Capra of Mistura Restaurant and Sopra Lounge.

I want to thank Rhonda Chan Maloney, Assistant Chef Concierge at the Hazelton Hotel for her hard work as Secretary as she is now on maternity leave. We wish her all the best in her new chapter in life. At the same time, I would like to thank Angela Pennmann, Concierge at the Four Seasons Hotel for volunteering her time as Secretary until the fall election.

For the third year in a row, the Board was able to support sending a full member to an International Congress, Mary Steadman, and a Pan American Congress, Angela Pennmann. We will continue to support members attending congresses as they are a most valuable educational and networking tool for our members in their continued growth as a concierge.

Over the next few months our focus will be on upcoming events:

We have introduced a leather bound menu book which has been provided to all Les Clefs d’Or hotels produced by Prestige Maps publication. The members are collaborating to ensure that all restaurants that support Les Clefs d’Or and that are frequently recommended by us, become part of this luxurious publication.

With Mary’s long list of achievements covers over 300 years of history. There has been military presence there since 1776, making it the Fort with the longest military presence in North America. We were treated to an express tour of the site and there was even a demonstration of how to shoot a musket. We then returned to the hotel to get ready for a wine tasting at Diane’s home, Barton House. We tasted various wines from a wine called Freedom Run as she shared her warm and inviting home with us. Her library had a vast selection of historical books, including some first edition copies. After the wine tasting the bus took us to the first restaurant in our dine around, Binksberry for appetizers then it was a short walk to the Brickyard Pub for more appetizers which consisted of incredibly delicious wings, barbeque chicken, pulled pork sandwiches and more. Our final destination for dinner was Carmelo’s where we were treated to some delicious veal and pasta. We then headed back to the hotel for some warm apple cider and dessert, which was followed by ghost stories around the fireplace in the lobby.

The next morning we were treated to a ‘summer breakfast’ at Waterstreet Landing. There were several speakers present, Whirlpool jet Boats, Art Park, where Lewiston holds outdoor concerts, musicals and plays and finally Fashion Outlet mall who gave a small presentation featuring the new additions and renovations taking place there. After breakfast it was sadly time to check out of the hotel and take one last little tour of the town by visiting various suggested retailers.

This was a wonderful experience highlighted by the company of our friends in Niagara and yet another chance for us to gain more knowledge of day trips that our guests may enjoy.

Mary-Eve Balla
LCD Reporter
Hotel Le Germain Toronto

Mary began her career in January 2000 when she was hired as a junior concierge on the Fairmont Gold Floor of the Fairmont Royal York. She was then asked to assist the lobby concierge during the summer season that same year. After completing 3 months of working in the lobby she developed a passion for service and a love of the concierge profession. There began her lifetime career as a Concierge. Mary was introduced to Les Clefs d’Or by her then Chef Concierge Mandy Assi, then Assistant Chef Concierge Amy Collier and Senior Concierge Brett Hickey who were all members of Les Clefs d’Or. They collectively educated her on what the organization represented and helped her gain an understanding of the responsibilities of being a member. After two years on the desk she was invited in by Amy and Mandy in 2002. A year later she became an active member and then a full member in 2003. In the very same year she became a full member she was nominated as Regional Secretary by Amy Collier and Lanfranco Guiland and won. At 25 years old she became one of the youngest board members in Ontario. In 2006 she became Regional Vice President. As Regional Vice President she is in charge of making the arrangements for our monthly meetings, our social outings and ensuring that memberships are kept under the Les Clefs d’Or statutes. She also assists the Regional Director, Toni Daoud by meeting with and screening potential new members, writing reports, and volunteering for all events to support our sponsors at events and fundraising.

With Mary’s long list of achievements what are her goals for the future? Mary would like to run for Regional President in the next elections and then eventually on the national level. Once she has gained more experience she would like to run on an international level and work on increasing memberships as well as sponsorships to the organization on all levels. Mary would also like to make contributions towards increasing the recognition of the brand. Mentoring new members and making sure that they become more involved with the organization on a regional, national and international level is also very important to her. Mary has attended many congresses including two national, two Pan American, and three international congresses. Mary is now the Chief Concierge at the Windsor Arms Hotel. She has made and continues to make many contributions to the Les Clefs d’Or organization. Thank you Mary!

Mary-Eve Balla
Hotel Le Germain Toronto
LCD Reporter

Behind The Keys: Mary Steadman
Niagara Region @ The Pan American

Attending my first Pan American Congress was an incredible experience as no detail was overlooked from start to finish. Saturday’s Educational portion by Terry Small was very memorable. The members in attendance could have listened to him for hours on end; he was absolutely a world of knowledge. After the Educational Seminar we were treated to a tour of Stanley Park, which was breathtaking for first-timers like me.

Rise and shine was the motto for Sunday as we undertook our fabulous adventure to Whistler on what turned out to be a beautiful day. The Telus Snowboarding and Ski Festival was just wrapping up and the panoramic view was spectacular! It was here that I witnessed one of the most innovative ideas as we were guided through the streets by volunteers holding yellow umbrellas. I am sure that this concept will make the creative achievements list and be remembered by the international delegates! On Monday it was nice to hear from members coast to coast in the AGM, what a unique opportunity! Later, everyone was anticipating the Gala Night which I will never forget! I would like to express my gratitude to the organizing committee and all the volunteers for their kindness in helping me through my first Pan American Congress!

Jamie Clarke
White Oaks Conference Resort & Spa

Behind The Keys: Rob Brazeau, Farewell to a Dear Friend

Rob Brazeau is currently Chef Concierge/Front Office Manager at the Queen’s Landing Hotel. He started his career in hospitality in 1986 holding various front of house positions in the hotel industry. He was part of the concierge team during the grand re-opening of the Prince of Wales Hotel in Niagara-On-The-Lake in 1999. It was during this time that Rob worked under, and was mentored by one of Les Clefs d’Or Canada’s legends, Gerald Parent. It was Gerald that introduced Rob to the Les Clefs d’Or, and in 2001 he became a member.

Since that time Rob has been a very active member and role model for all the members of the Niagara Region. He took on a large role in the 2004 Congress Committee that brought all of Canada’s Members to our neck of the woods. He is also Co-Chair for our Annual Charity Golf Classic Tournament that has seen repeated and improved success over the past years. Rob has mentored all the current members working in Niagara-On-The-Lake, including myself.

As one of the founding fathers of the Niagara Region, Rob has helped the Les Clefs d’Or brand become familiar to our now many local partners. He is always at the forefront of any charity work and fundraising projects. His thoughts and insight always fall to a silenced room as the members of Niagara respect his ideas and his long years of experience. He always puts this great organization first above all else to keep its integrity, as I know he takes great pride in wearing those keys on his lapels.

Away from work Rob enjoys spending time with his daughters and family. He also has a great passion for golf. Although, anyone that knows Rob well will know that his great interests can quickly become an intense obsession which usually, in this case, keeps him in the short grass! In short, Rob is a tremendous leader for us in the Niagara Region and though I mention all of his great professionalism, it is his sense of humor that reigns as his best feature.

We will all miss you, good luck with your new career!

Korey Rorison
Vintage Hotels
LCD Reporter

Niagara Region
Director’s Report

What’s up down in Niagara?

Well, we’re back from another great congress and to that, Niagara’s members offer their thanks and congratulations to the organizing committee for creating such a truly memorable event. Canadians always seem to “raise the bar”. First time attendees, from Niagara, were Allison Wiens, Secretary, Craig Montesso, Treasurer and newly minted “Apprentice”, Jamie Clarke.

I begin with some sad news…Niagara has said “Farewell” to some key members. Diane Harding, retired (Hilton Fallsview), Krystal Doyle, new career direction (Hilton Fallsview), Don Lemieux, new career direction, (Fallsview Casino Resort), our golf tournament co-chair, Rob Brazeau, new career direction (Queen’s Landing) and last but not least, your National Newsletter Co-Editor and Niagara’s Vice-Director, Korey Rorison also new career change (Pillar and Post Hotel). I know you will all join me in wishing all these great personalites much success in their new endeavors.

Niagara is busy working towards the publication of its 5th edition of Prestige’s “Clefs d’Or Concierge” Map. May 14th sees the group venture into “un-charted waters” by participating in our first ever “Attractions Trade Show”. Last but certainly not least, preparations are on their way for our annual Clefs d’Or Charity Golf Tournament, to be held in September. The success of these fundraising events is counted on by our regional charities.

Finally, seeing all the gifted individuals in attendance at the “General Assembly”, I can’t help but to marvel at all the potential “Board Members” for this upcoming election. I would urge all of my colleagues, across Canada, to consider taking on this challenge. At the very least, I ask that you all do your part by participating and volunteering in your region’s projects. Keeping in mind that Les Clefs d’Or is all about you…the member.

See you all in Calgary,
God Bless
Andre Plouffe
Sterling Inn and Spa
Director – Niagara Region

Behind The Keys: Rob Brazeau, Farewell to a Dear Friend

Rob Brazeau is currently Chef Concierge/Front Office Manager at the Queen’s Landing Hotel. He started his career in hospitality in 1986 holding various front of house positions in the hotel industry. He was part of the concierge team during the grand re-opening of the Prince of Wales Hotel in Niagara-On-The-Lake in 1999. It was during this time that Rob worked under, and was mentored by one of Les Clefs d’Or Canada’s legends, Gerald Parent. It was Gerald that introduced Rob to the Les Clefs d’Or, and in 2001 he became a member.

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We will all miss you, good luck with your new career!

Korey Rorison
Vintage Hotels
LCD Reporter
Dear friends,

Yet another year has passed us by. We are still riding the wave of the success of the National Congress last April in our region. I’d like to thank everyone who participated in the success of this congress for their hard work and dedication.

2007 has brought a healthy growth in membership to our region. I am very proud to say that we now have 41 Les Clefs d’Or members in our region which includes 3 members in Ottawa, 1 in the Eastern Townships, 1 in Moncton and 5 in Halifax. It also gives us great pride to see the progression of our membership in the Atlantic region. Following our Board meeting in Halifax last fall, we were all very pleased to see the extent of the support for Les Clefs d’Or in that region.

As our monthly meetings continue to be productive and proactive, one of our main goals this year is to strengthen our relationships with the local restaurateurs. To do this, we have put together an action plan for 2008 which is sure to be fruitful with the implication of all our members.

On behalf of my regional board Jeanne Lefebvre, Patrick Huynh and Julien Tanguy, I would like to wish you all a very successful 2008. I hope to see many of you in Calgary to renew our bond of friendship!

Vive les Clefs d’Or!

Hugo Legrand

Softel Montreal

Director—Montreal Region

Charities and Fundraisers

There has been a lot of activity in Montreal in the last several months. In addition to the Canadian Congress last April, we participated in several charity events which included the Annual Ste-Justine Golf tournament, the MPI convention (concierges from different hotels collaborated together in order to assist the meeting planners), the Terry Fox Run, the Spinal Cord Foundation Gala night (in which we acted as the greeting committee), our Annual Children Charity Christmas Party, and finally the Ste-Justine Hospital’s Gala night.

Among the best events, the Terry Fox Run was a true success. It was Montreal’s second participation in the event. We had amassed $900 in donations in 2006 and an amazing $5,945 this year! The number of concierges participating in the actual run also went up from 6 in 2006 to 15 in 2007! This year’s run was put together by Marc-Olivier Chrétien and Marie-Ève Larin from the Place d’Armes Hotel. We had a lot of fun during this beautiful day and here are some fun facts from the event: Alain Éthier, Chef Concierge at the St-James promised to run 10km in less than an hour if he raised $500 in donations (he succeeded), Marc-Olivier Chrétien was the first one to finish the run in 50 minutes for 10 km (bravo!) and Simon Stewart, from the Sofitel, as well as Nathalie Zakarian, from Air Canada raised $1000 each in donations. Congratulations to all! The goal which we intend to reach for 2008 is $10,000.

Marie-Eve Larin
Place d’Armes Hotel

LCD Reporter

Behind The Keys: Marc-Olivier Chrétien

Marc-Olivier is also an instrumental part of the acclaimed “Comité d’éducation” of the Montreal section of Les Clefs d’Or, being responsible for the production of the monthly “Banques de données”, which are databases full of valuable information about a different subject every month. For almost four years now, Marco has made sure we receive these wonderful concierge tools month after month. Marc-Olivier was also the leading force behind last year’s Terry Fox Run event in which the Montreal region shattered the proposed goal by collecting more than $5000 for cancer research. His leadership is undeniable and his drive relentless. He is, in my opinion, one of the rising stars of Les Clefs d’Or and we should hear from him for many years to come.

Marc-Olivier started attending our meetings as a concierge at Hotel de Fort, a hotel with little or no history of having a concierge on duty. He fought for his job and his title almost on a daily basis until he got recognition and support from his management. Coming out of the International Concierge Institute in Quebec City, he came to conquer Montreal and practically invented the concierge position in his hotel! We quickly realized he was the real thing when we regularly heard his radiophonic voice from the back of the room at our monthly meetings, making intelligent comments and sharing pertinent information and new finds with the group.

In 2005, I knew I had to give him a shot at what he called “The Big Leagues” and was happy to welcome him to the concierge team at Hotel Le St-James. It was a pleasure to watch him charm our guests with his legendary politeness, professionalism and amazing efficiency. No challenge was too big and no client was too demanding for Marco.

Last year Marco moved on to the Place d’Armes Hotel where he was named Chef Concierge. He has big plans to improve the quality of service offered by his department and by the hotel in general, doing his best to reach total guest satisfaction. He also has big plans to help the Clefs d’Or association grow even more healthy and strong in the coming years. I know he will succeed in both!

Alain Éthier
Hotel Le St.-James
Quebec & Charlevoix

Director’s Report

We are celebrating our 400th anniversary in Quebec City this year, so the upcoming season looks very cheerful and super busy for the concierge! Fortunately, we got energized at the Pan American Congress of Les Clefs d’Or in Vancouver! Geoff and his team: Bertine, Sheron, Tracy, Miguel and everyone made it an amazing experience, BRAVO LES COPAINS!

We would like to give a very special HOORAA to Carolina, our extraordinary Secretary for keeping us updated on everything and being very supportive to the whole Canadian Board!

In Quebec City there is more and more appreciation of the concierge. We are often requested to give lectures, to attend the launching of new attractions, new stores, and new exhibits. In fact, invitations are pouring and we are not enough players to attend each event. Last winter I attended different events 5 nights in a row: a cocktail for La Foundation Serge Bruyere, a concierge meeting, the launching of the store Harricana, a snowshoeing invitation on a full moon night on the Plains of Abraham and a press conference! Les Clefs d’Or is a full time job! However, all of this is very constructive, and in our lives, no one knows what it is to stand still!

Our team is growing; we are now 14 members plus 2 retired members, and each and every one of them are very involved in organizing activities for the members. There is a golfing day coming ahead (visiting 6 golf clubs in one day), a kayaking day to lie aux Coudres, our speedy discovery of the Clefs d’Or meeting in June, an invitation to visit Eastern Townships early fall and so much more to come… I would also like to attend a Les Clefs d’Or meeting in Halifax, which is not exactly next door…

From the Quebec and Charlevoix teams of Les Clefs d’Or, we wish you all a wonderful busy summer, and do not forget to send your guests to Quebec City for the 400th anniversary! www.myquebec2008.com

Anne McKenna
Fairmont Les Chateau Frontenac
Director—Quebec and Charlevoix Region

Behind The Keys: Annie-Karine Lachance

Annie-Karine has always known that she loves helping and serving guests. To better her guest services, she has at times resided in English speaking provinces, which has in turn opened new doors of opportunity for her.

She started in the hotel business as a maitre d’ and then managed the VIP Club in a chain hotel of 55 rooms, where she developed the concierge service desk. Having heard of her, Les Clefs d’Or association invited her to assist at monthly meetings. After four years, she felt the need to further the standards of her personal guest service and joined the Hotel Dominion 1912 with Quebec City’s wonder team. In 2005 this hotel was recognized world wide as the best hotel in Canada and 7th best hotel in the world by Conde Nast Travellers. In December 2007, after five years of being actively involved in the Quebec and Charlevoix region of Les Clefs d’Or, Annie-Karine decided to apply and received her first golden key.

2008 is the 400th anniversary of Quebec City. It will be a wonderful year, full of challenges and experiences for all of us. During this celebratory year, next December, Annie-Karine will have the added pleasure of receiving her 2nd golden key and becoming part of the big elite family of Les Clefs d’Or International.

Louise Morin, LCD Reporter
Hotel Chateau Laurier Quebec

Les Clefs d’Or Montreal Visits Quebec City

Montrealers are coming! We were all so happy to hear that they were coming and being good hosts, we couldn’t wait for them to arrive in our beautiful city.

Louis Philippe from Loews Hotel Vogue was the Montreal organizer, and in Quebec City we had the Dominion team with Claude Lavoie, Annie Karine and Simon joined by Sandrine Bonnet from the Auberge Saint-Antoine and our beloved Louise Roy at Levis. The program was very well organized but winter nature in our region is very powerful! They were to leave early Sunday morning and stop on their way at the Ice Hotel, arriving in Quebec City around 3:00 pm BUT … on Sunday morning Highways 40 and 20 were closed due to a major snow storm! So, our hopeful colleagues got together in Montreal and ate a very long breakfast while they waited for the roads to reopen. Their perseverance paid off and they were able to leave at 1:00 pm BUT … they could not get to the Ice Hotel because that road was blocked due to a major accident involving 12 cars… so they drove on to Quebec City where the cheerful teams were expecting them.

We QUICKLY left for appetizers and dinner at Le Cercle, which was absolutely perfect! The evening was to be spent at Boudoir Bar, BUT…they unfortunately had no electricity due to the storm so Annie Karine and Simon found another venue - Les Salons d’Edgard where it was tango evening and billiards, we all had a great time!

Next morning, with clear blue skies and two meters of snow in town, the roads were clear enough for the team to make a QUICK decision and finally travelled to the Ice Hotel. Then, QUICKLY… they caught the ferry to Levis to get a nice narrated visit of the historical part of Levis and enjoyed a fabulous lunch at Louise Roy, Auberge Artistique de la Visitation. We QUICKLY returned to Quebec and attended the Les Clefs d’Or meeting at Le Versa restaurant with a guest speaker from the Quebec 400th anniversary! We all had a great time because when Quebec and Montreal mingle, it is all about “In Service through Friendship!”

BRAVO to all these true Clefs d’Or concierges for being so perseverant and making it happen quickly and effortlessly! Exactly the way we make it happen for our guests every day!

Anne McKenna
Fairmont Les Chateau Frontenac
LCD Reporter

Louis McKenna
I had the privilege of attending my first International Congress as the recipient of our countrywide member’s raffle. This was the chance of a lifetime; Les Clefs d’Or Canada was sending a member to represent them and I was the lucky one to be chosen. On the 11th of January, upon arrival, I was met at the airport by a local member of Les Clefs d’Or Denmark, who assured me onto a waiting bus. I was immediately impressed by the networking possibilities, as I made new LCD contacts on route to the hotel.

On the first evening we had a welcoming reception; it was the first taste of the great experiences yet to come. Here, we were introduced to the organizing committee and enjoyed some local entertainment as well as a special appearance from the Queen of Denmark, played by a local member. The following day, was our first educational session, at which the main subject was branding. We all collaborated and worked on the image of the UICH and the direction which we want to take in the future. We were very fortunate to have some guest speakers who shared with us the story of their companies and organizations.

On the second day we presented to all the boards the work we had accomplished on the first day and had a thorough discussion on the important values that make our organization what it is today. In the afternoon we had a second speaker who really impressed me. A soldier who spends four months every year in Greenland with one other soldier some dogs and a sled. The subject of his presentation was about trust and the attitude in front of a problem. While his experience with these two subjects are for him a question of life and death, there was a way for us to relate to our every day jobs. He impressed all of us with a mind-blowing trust exercise. With two volunteers, he started by putting the tip of an arrow at the neck of one volunteer, and had the second volunteer hold the back of the arrow. Then the one with the tip on her neck had to trust the other person and take a step forward. The result of this was that the arrow broke into two pieces. I am sorry to report I did not have the guts to try.

On the third day after a lunch at the town hall, we had some free time to tour and enjoy this great city. Finally on the last day I attended the general assembly; this is where you really get an incredible sense of what Les Clefs d’Or is all about. It’s an incredible feeling to be in the room with the president of all the 39 countries, the committee des sages and the international board. It feels like attending a meeting of the United Nations! It was a great feeling to be in the room and witness the confirmation, that we are doing a good job. Finally, at the closing gala we were able to say thank you to the organizing committee and also say goodbye to our new friend.

Over all this was an amazing learning experience and cultural trip. I had the chance to meet and exchange ideas with other people who share the same passion and challenges and learn about a great new culture. I would really like to thank Les Clefs d’Or Canada for the opportunity they gave me by sending me to represent them.

Francois-Pascal Leblanc
Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel
When Carolina asked me to write about my experience at the Vancouver Congress, I thought it would be easy. Now that I sit down to actually put my memories and thoughts into words, I am stumped. I can come up with exactly one: WOW.

The Vancouver organizing committee did such a great job organizing this Congress, and let me tell you, I know how much work it is to organize a Congress, having been the General Secretary of the 2007 Congress in New York City.

While my memories are focusing more on the fun, I must not overlook the incredible educational forum which was organized for us. Our keynote speaker, Mr. Terry Small, spoke on the power of the human brain. Perhaps the most amazing thing I took from his speech was that if we were able to make a computer with the same computing power as the human brain, it would cover all of BC to a height of 150 feet! Can you imagine?

Speaking of covering all of BC, we almost did. From seeing the sights of Vancouver to scaling the heights of Whistler to perhaps the most incredible train trip in existence, from amazing food to informative meetings, the Vancouver Committee set a new standard for Excellence.

We had a very productive day of meetings for the US and Canadian Sections and then, highlight of them all, the Great Gatsby Gala. What a great idea to have a theme for the gala. Flapper dresses abounded, we were all dressed to the nine. The food was amazing, and the band kept everyone dancing until the wee hours.

As a member of the USA Board of Directors, it was my privilege to stay an extra day for Board meetings, and let me tell you, it was quite a sight to see Sheron Empey back at her desk at the Four Seasons, keys gleaming and smile glowing through the exhaustion of having just put together, with the help of her amazing Vancouver and Whistler colleagues, a Congress which I know I will never forget!

As an American delegate, I have to single out one special guest of the US Section: Saleem Khan, who many of the Congress attendees were lucky to get to meet. Saleem was in a serious car accident in February, and it was through the grace of God and a lot of love from his parents and his brother, that Saleem was able to come with us and enjoy parts of the spouse program, particularly the day at Whistler. Saleem is an extraordinary young man, and the time I spent with him in Vancouver was truly remarkable.

I’d also like to single out Geoff Argue, who not only served as President, but as one of the main organizers. Pulling "double duty" like that is no small feat, and Geoff accomplished it seamlessly. Kudos. That said, it was truly special to see everyone at the Congress. As an “outsider,” it is thrilling to see the strength and friendship of the Canadian section. You guys are amazing, and it was our privilege to be your guests in Vancouver. Along with my American colleagues, I have to say, I can’t wait to see what's going to happen in Toronto for 2011. Thank you again for your friendship and hard work.

In Service Through Friendship,
Jon Adler
Concierge, The St. Regis New York
Secretary, Les Clefs d’Or USA

Vancouver Pan American Spousal Perspective

Let me start by congratulating the organizing committee on keeping the spousal contingent well occupied and entertained. We were shown a brilliant portrait of Vancouver and area from the Museum of Anthropology, China Town and Stanley Park to the Capilano Suspension Bridge and Whistler Mountain. I have visited Vancouver several times over the years and this was the best by far. I learned a great deal about the history, people and amenities of the city and all it has to offer, largely due to the wealth of knowledge provided by our escorts and drivers – top-notch job all!

Now to my favorite topic, food. What can I say, lunch at both the Sequoia Grill and Lift Bar & Grill were great and talk about location, location, location. Our escorts had to drag us out of both.

Dinner at the Shore Club was memorable as well, the shrimp and scallop ceviche was brilliant to say the least, – my compliments to the chef! The train trip to Whistler was a personal highlight of the trip, great food, exemplary service and once again a wealth of information from the Mountaineer staff. And to top everything off the gala at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, great food, great band and great company, what more could you ask for.

The total effort put forward on our behalf, from organizing the program to our escorts and certainly the local businesses that participated made for a brilliant weekend in Vancouver.

I would also like to acknowledge all the Les Clefs d’Or delegates who sat through meetings and educational sessions so that we, the partners, had the opportunity to play to our hearts content…. much appreciated. And to the other spouses, who added immeasurably to my enjoyment of our Vancouver experience, thank you one and all. Special thanks to Ralph and Steven, my new wine drinking buddies from Washington D.C. – looking forward to meeting again over a good bottle of wine.

I was the very lucky guest of Lynn Banford member of Les Clefs d’Or and Concierge with the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel in Banff, Alberta.

Sign us up for the next congress!

James Banford
Louie Pedro (Fairmont Royal York, Toronto) recently had a little guest who was very “into” chess, so he went out and purchased a chess board for the little fellow to play with while he was staying at the hotel.

Wow, Angela Penman (Four Seasons, Toronto) recently arranged for a $10 - $12 thousand diamond engagement ring at 10:30pm on a Saturday night.

Amy Collier (Hazelton Hotel, Toronto) assisted a certain guest when he lost his luggage during the Film Festival and was able to secure a personal shopping experience at Harry Rosen within 10 minutes of his arrival to her hotel.

Toni Diollo (Prince Arthur, Toronto) impressed one of the Blue Jays so greatly, that he chose to be a guest at his property with his family for the entire 2008 season!

Mara McColeman (Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver) amazed her guests by leaving her desk and finding them in busy Holt Renfrew when a quick decision had to be made in regards to a critical flight schedule. She found the parents by spotting the daughters in the store - they were extremely impressed.

Louis-Philippe Talbot (Loews Hotel Vogue, Montreal) found 4 African-American models for a Nigerian Airline fashion show in less than two hours; bought a Christmas tree and decorations for a family’s Christmas party in their suite; acted as a witness for a guest’s wedding at the hotel; assisted an American family leave Canada with children without passports… and finally, made an AWESOME video of the PanAmerican congress to show to his GM.

Paul Smith moved from the Niagara Region’s Prince of Wales Hotel & Spa, to the Intercontinental Toronto Centre and joined the Ontario Region.

Amy Collier (Toronto) moved from the Fairmont Royal York and is now Chef Concierge at the Hazelton Hotel.

Rhonda Chan Maloney (Toronto) moved from the Soho Metropolitan and is now the Assistant Chef Concierge at the Hazelton Hotel. She is presently on maternity leave.

Renaldo Breton (Toronto) moved from the Fairmont Royal York to the Hazelton Hotel.

Stéphane Mouttet (Vancouver) will be leaving the Pan Pacific Vancouver in August and will be joining the new Shangri-la Vancouver in October as their Chef Concierge.

Marc-Olivier Chrétien (Montreal) moved from the St-James Hotel and is now Chef Concierge at the Hotel Place d’Armes.

Luc Lavoie (Montreal) moved from the Hotel Place d’Armes and is now Chef Concierge at the Crystal de la Montagne.

Marie-Ève Larin (Montreal) moved from the Hotel de l’Institut and Hotel St-Sulpice and is now at the Hotel Place d’Armes.

Julien Tanguy (Montreal) moved from the Saint-Sulpice hotel and is now at the Hilton Bonaventure Montreal.

Long Chiem (Montreal) moved from the Hyatt Regency and is now at the Hilton Bonaventure Montreal.

Corey Stirrett (Niagara) stepped into the role of Chef Concierge and Front Office Manager at the Queens Landing Hotel in Niagara on the Lake, now that Rob Brazeau has moved onto pursue other adventures.

Andre Plouffe (Niagara) moved from the Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort and is now Chef Concierge at the Sterling Inn and Spa in Niagara Falls.
Our Member’s Share:

Stephanie Burgess (Holt Renfrew, Toronto) who had baby girl Nathalie born on Feb. 11th, 2007 shared a great mat leave with Carolina Avaria (InterContinental Toronto Yorkville) who had Josephine Shinobu on May 17th. Both mommies are now back at work.

Congratulations to Maxime Morrell (Toronto Tourism) who just got married on May 18th, 2008! She was also Employee of the Month for November of 2007!

Lanfranco Gualandi (Soho Metropolitan, Toronto) would like to say thank you to all of us for our recognition of his 30 years as a member.

Gerald Parent (American Express, Toronto) became a Membre D’honneur, UICH Les Clefs d’Or on April 17th, 2007 as well as celebrated his 20th Anniversary in LCD.

Dean Ferguson (Manulife Centre, Toronto) would like us to know he is still single. (Way to go Dean!)

Congratulations to Rhonda Chan Moloney (Hazelton Hotel, Toronto) who has recently given birth to our latest family member in Ontario – little Jacob Maloney arrived on May 1st, 2008!

Congratulations to François-Pascal Leblanc (Fairmount Queen Elizabeth in Montreal) who is now the proud father of baby Gabriel, born September 21st, 2007!

Congratulations to Roxane Dompierre (Hilton Lac Leamy) who was nominated by a guest to Ottawa’s Star of the City program for her exemplary service.

Congratulations to Roberto Pita (InterContinental Montreal) and Tania Teolis who were happily wed on August 25th, 2007.
Photos From the Pan American Congress Vancouver

Thank you Vancouver Organizing Committee!
Stay tuned for our Fall Edition!