

# Le CyberJournal

of the Society of FLMI of Montreal

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## WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Christmas already!

During this holiday season, many people are alone, without basic necessities and many are living on the streets.

Enjoy what life has given you but do not forget that many in our community are suffering.

If you are able to come to the aid of a person in need during this special time of year, I am sure that this will be the greatest of all, for both of you. Try it and you'll see!

**Happy Holidays** to all of you.

Please note:

The column *Careers in the industry* is on hiatus.

We have a new address as of January 1st:

[journal@loma-montreal.com](mailto:journal@loma-montreal.com)



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2004

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Louise Lalonde, FLMI, ACS, AIAA	LOMA Committee representative

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Editor : Diane Masse

Contributors

Research: Nicole Lachance

Translation: Armand Picard

Adrienne Piggott

To reach us please write to the following address:

[journal@loma-montreal.com](mailto:journal@loma-montreal.com)

Website: [www.loma-montreal.com](http://www.loma-montreal.com)

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the end of December 2004, I will complete my two-year mandate as president of the FLMI Society of Montreal. My primary objective throughout my time as president was to work toward the revitalisation of the Society. It was certainly a daunting task. However, as I pass the torch on to our new president, Jean Moreau, I believe we can say that we are on the right track.

- New members have joined the Board of Directors, injecting new blood and rejuvenating the Board
- We are very proud of the revamped image of our bulletin, now called *The CyberJournal*
- With regards to training, we have expanded the number of courses offered in English
- Our membership form has been improved to allow you to provide us with valuable feedback
- The last two Society activities have seen increased participation by both members and non-members

The work of the Board Members and their sub-committees made all of these achievements possible. Thank you all for supporting me throughout this mandate.

We are eager to capitalise on this momentum and - to do so - we need new members to combine their efforts with those of our various committees. Are you ready to join the ranks? As I reach the end of my term of service, this is my fondest hope.

While I am leaving the presidency, I will continue to serve the Society as President Ex-officio. I will strive to assist our new president in his mandate. He will be informing you of the new goals he plans to achieve during his term in the next issue of the *CyberJournal*.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours Happy Holidays and all the best for 2005. This is the ideal time to celebrate with family and friends. I plan on enjoying myself and I hope that you will also.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming Society activities.

Mireille Beauchemin, President  
Society of FLMI of Montreal

## PRESENTATION OF THE JACQUES-BÉDARD AWARD

During our Annual meeting, held November 18th last, the quality and hard work of one of our own was recognised.

This year, the Jacques-Bédard award was presented to Bruna Montesi, Educational representative at Standard Life, for her dedication to the cause of education within the insurance industry for many years.

Our warm congratulations to you Bruna, for an honour that is well earned.

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

## NEW FLMI GRADUATES

This year, once again, we have a new vintage of FLMI graduates to honour.

Shirley Brongel - ACS, CERT, FLMI  
Standard Life

Ghislain Lafrance, CERT, FLMI  
Standard Life

Mario Provencher, ACS, AIAA, ARA,  
CERT, FLMI  
Standard Life

Cédulie Laberge, ACS, CERT, FLMI  
Desjardins Sécurité Financière

Alain Parent, ACS, CERT, FLMI  
Desjardins Sécurité Financière

Michel Lefebvre, ACS, CERT, FLMI  
Atlantic Bleu Cross Care

Congratulations to all of you.

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

## WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

During the Annual Assembly of the FLMI Society of Montreal, held on November 18th, our guest speaker was Louise Lalonde, who has been a member of the Board of Directors for many years. Louise demonstrated another of her many talents by delivering a presentation on a subject with which she is very familiar - Women and Leadership.

What do we know about the true experience of female management? How do female managers manage? When it comes to practices and attitudes, are women really that different? All of these questions were addressed in a light-hearted manner.

Louise began by defining leadership, using a bicycle as a metaphor. A strong leader uses the rear wheel's propulsion to carry the team towards its goal and keeps a firm grip on the handlebars to guide it in the right direction.

Following this analogy, she began her discussion about the major differences between male and female leadership. Her analysis reveals that these management styles can be distinguished by their attitudes and values. Men require a great deal of control and power to feel comfortable in leadership roles while women require recognition. Men focus their efforts on the task at hand while women are more concerned with the people under their authority. It is important to note that neither of these management practices is superior to the other. They simply represent different ways to achieve the same goal. The ideal team should be comprised of both men and women. When we seek to complement each other, we can leverage our strengths to maximise our successes and achieve excellence.

Thank you, Louise, for sharing your experiences with us. All in attendance greatly appreciated your presentation and, judging by the comments we have received and the reaction of the audience, many people identified with your depictions, both male and female.

Mireille Beauchemin, présidente  
Society of FLMI of Montreal



## A CHRISTMAS STORY

Ever so patiently, flake by flake, the snow had woven its white mantle. Fir trees hastened their trek to the city, attracted by this beautiful white covering. Since then, every night, our fair city changed into its scintillating costume, lit by millions of sparkling lights. Children could barely keep still and kept walking past the Christmas trees as though every step would bring them closer to the big night. Without a doubt, Christmas was on its way.

In stores, adults squeezed through the aisles, pushed each other aside and grumbled under their breath. While they were frantically preparing for Christmas, outside, homeless people were trying to keep warm. Alice closed her front door with a sense of relief. She felt a twinge of sadness in her heart when she picked up the newspaper in the entrance. It reminded her of her neighbour's seventeen-year-old son who had committed suicide just a few days before. Alice fought this feeling of sadness and the heaviness in her heart that were trying to lure her away from the Christmas Eve party that she had to prepare.

While Alice was in the kitchen getting more "hors d'oeuvres", a guest, trying to clear his conscience, was saying "People from charitable organisations keep telling us that we have such big hearts. We have all made charitable contributions and now we can rejoice and celebrate. Bring out the champagne, truffles and caviar. Tonight, we have earned the right to feast." In the living room, Christmas wrapping were flying and children were squealing. They squabbled, trampled some gifts and fought over others. After exchanging presents, the adults were quietly contemplating whether the gifts they received were as valuable as the ones they had given. Already, they were busy planning next year's Christmas.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the city, a man, laden with food and other goodies rang a neighbour's doorbell. Without hesitation, a young boy let him in, while his father looked on, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. At first, few words were spoken but many smiles were exchanged and then everyone seemed happy. In a strong English accent, this stranger, recently arrived, invited his generous neighbour to share in the feast. The benefactor feasted on bright eyes and happy faces. After all, Christmas comes but once a year. He was anxious to tell his fairy like wife about the teary eyes, timid smiles and rosy cheeks. He slipped out quietly, leaving the family to its own enjoyment. No need to gloat over one's deeds.

In Alice's living room, guests had departed and excitement had given way to boredom. On the table, candles were slowly burning amidst the leftovers. The floor, strewn with Christmas wrappings, made for a sad setting for the Christmas tree. In a corner, Alice's husband was sleeping off his wine while Alice sat in the kitchen brooding over what had become of Christmas. Would this competition ever end? Had happiness become so difficult to find that each year we had to buy more and more frivolous gifts, spending ever-increasing sums of money?

Why had these gourmet feasts and luxurious gifts not brought her more pleasure and satisfaction? Was Christmas solely reserved for children? In this setting, surrounded by dirty dishes, Alice fell asleep.

Alice? Aaaaaiiiiice? Come out and play with me. Alice examined her reflection in the mirror and thought that she looked pretty good. She imagined herself at Midnight Mass, proudly showing off in her white satin dress. When she got home, she would find out if Santa had received her letter. Right now, the Christmas tree gave off its delightful pine scent but hid none of the treasures that she so desired. In the kitchen, her mother put the last touches on Christmas Eve dinner to the sound of hymns. Suddenly, a voice was heard saying "Children, off to bed." Upstairs, Alice soaked in the smell of her mother's traditional meat pies before going to sleep. The crash of dirty dishes woke her. Once again, Christmas had been stolen from Alice.

Seized by a sudden inspiration, she headed for the phone. After searching for a bit, she found the number she was looking for. Her conversation was brief but very warm. Alice then woke her husband and children, packed up the leftover turkey, champagne and some pâtés. Grumbling, her husband started the car. What kind of reception awaited them? They had long ago lost touch with that brother of hers and his dubious relations. Isn't he the one who invited beggars, vagabonds and homeless people to his home for holiday celebrations? When they arrived, the door swung wide. Alice hugged a tall, jolly man and cried out "Noël, it's really you, at last!"

Many guests were seated around the table, but no one saw beggars or vagabonds. In any event, the atmosphere in the house was so cordial that the poorest of beggars would have been mistaken for a prince. The children had dipped into their treasure chests and offered their gifts to all of the kids in the house. Never had they dreamed that it would be possible to take such pleasure in giving their own gifts to others. Even Alice's husband's mood improved and he enjoyed conversing with everyone. Brother and sister exchanged glances that spoke volumes. Alice proposed a toast to their Christmases of old.

It had been a long time since they had enjoyed themselves so much but now, it was time to go. As they were leaving, a man laden with trays appeared before them. While handing out the trays he said "Tzank you Noël, tzank you again", with a heavy accent. He said goodbye, winked at Alice and disappeared. At that moment, Alice heard a sound that she alone seemed to hear: a tinkling bell. Intrigued, she looked up and seemed to see something flying away. "I must be crazy", she thought smiling. Alice and Noël embraced once again; the kids pledged to return the following year and everyone left feeling very, very happy. Alice's husband looked at her mischievously and said, "A beautiful Christmas is priceless. For everything else there is..."

Diane Masse, B.A., FLMI  
Society of FLMI of Montreal

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2005



THE CYBERJOURNAL TEAM