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Samuel de Champlain Immortalized in a New Light in Upcoming PBS Special



Stuart Nulman
Special
Times

When I was in Grade 10 and studying Canadian history (which was – and still is – one of the requirements to get your high school leaving certificate), the early part of the course always involved explorer Samuel de Champlain and his discovery of New France (Quebec City) in 1608. And every exam and test about that part of Canadian history always involved that discovery, as well as his voyages across the Great Lakes and Upstate New York (where he discovered the lake that bears his name).

Basically, after the course was done and the last exam was written, Samuel de Champlain

faded from memory. However, the people at the Plattsburgh, New York-based Mountain Lake PBS have used the latest in computer animation technology – not to mention a great deal of thorough research for authenticity – to bring back the legacy of Samuel de Champlain and his contribution to the development of the region for future generations to appreciate even more.

This has been done in the form of "Dead Reckoning – Champlain in America", a 52-minute animated documentary that was produced to cap off the 400th anniversary commemoration of Champlain's journeys in the Lake Champlain region. "The concept for this documentary began two years ago, and we wanted something that was historically accurate, that would promote the history of the region and attract a younger audience, especially in the classroom," said Mountain Lake PBS CEO and President Alice Recore at a special screening of "Dead Reckoning" at the de Seve Cinema of Concordia University, which took place on December 1.

"Dead Reckoning – Champlain in America" is a wonderful history lesson that comes



Samuel de Champlain

alive from the pages of the history books. The painstaking research that went into this production to ensure that every aspect and every detail of Samuel de Champlain's explorations in New France from 1604 -1615 were accurate has succeeded tremendously. And the state-of-the-art computer animation that was done by the Montreal-based Artifex Animation Studio has breathed new life into Samuel de Cham-

plain and his world that staid, passive illustrations in a textbook used to accomplish so many years before. As well, it gives insight not only into the world of the aboriginal peoples that he encountered, the hardships that were endured, and the raison d'être behind those journeys, but it also gives more insight to the type of person Champlain was.

"Samuel de Champlain was a man of great conviviality and humanity," said Colin Powers, Director of Productions and Programming for Mountain Lake PBS. "He had this ability to make friends wherever he went."

"Dead Reckoning – Champlain in America" is slated to air on Mountain Lake PBS, as well as other PBS stations across the United States and in parts of Canada, in early 2010. For more information about the documentary and the subject matter, log on to www.champlaininamerica.org.

The 28th edition of the Just For Laughs comedy festival doesn't begin until July 15, but festival organizers have already announced its first show, and it involves the return of one of its most popular performers. Tap Dogs, the Australian troupe

that combines tap dancing, theatre and rock music, returns for a 12-day engagement at Just For Laughs, 14 years after its phenomenal North American debut at the festival. Tap Dogs, which have performed in front of 12 million spectators in 330 cities since then, will perform at Theatre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts from July 13-25, and will add several Canadian dancers to the group for this engagement. Tickets start at \$45.50 and are now on sale at the Place des Arts box office and the Just For Laughs box office. For more information, call 514-845-2322.

Clyde's, the popular Pointe Claire nightspot located at 286 Lakeshore Road, magically turns into Liverpool's legendary Cavern Club tonight (December 12), as REPLAY The Beatles, a tribute band dedicated to the Fab Four, will perform a special Christmas show starting at 8:30 p.m. This flashback to the glory days of Beatlemania (circa 1963-64) will cost only \$15 per person (tickets available only at the door), and \$1 from every ticket sold will benefit the Ste. Anne's Veteran's Hospital Foundation. For more information, call 514-630-8118.

If you want to enjoy an evening of Christmas entertainment for a good cause, catch the 8th Annual Christmas Concert and Food Drive on December 17, 7:30 p.m., at the Dorval-Strathmore United Church, located at 310 Brookhaven in Dorval. This year's concert will feature the Mimosa Wind Ensemble and the 306 Maple Leaf Wing Pipes and Drums, playing a selection of Christmas standards and other popular songs. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door, along with a non-perishable food item. To reserve your tickets, call Lorraine at 514-793-9879.

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