



au courant

Newsletter of the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums

CFFM is proud to have Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada, as its Patron.

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Federal Heritage Programs Under Siege

Peter Homulos

The federal Government has announced deep cuts in the heritage, arts and cultural sectors that total more than \$40 million. These cuts are in addition to reductions to the Museums Assistance Program going back to 2006 and the more recent elimination of the Exhibit Transportation Services.

These decisions are particularly distressing, as the government had pledged to develop and implement a new Museums Policy for Canada that would have added significant new funding to support this vital sector of our national life. The upcoming federal election is the ideal time for all CFFM members to remind politicians of all parties of their past pledges and to make support for culture an important part of the election dialogue.

The cuts affect us all, for example, elimination of the Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program (CAHSP) will mean a loss of \$3 million annually that was intended to be invested in building capacity in Canadian museums, galleries and related institutions. The visibility of Canada internationally will also be seriously impacted with cuts to programs like PromArt (<http://www.international.gc.ca/culture/arts/perf-en.asp>) and Trade Routes (http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/ac-ca/progs/rc-tr/progs/pcrc-trcp/index_e.cfm) both designed to build Canadian cultural linkages abroad by enabling Canadian creators to participate more effectively in events outside Canada, and to build foreign markets for their products and services.

The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) has reviewed the cuts carefully and has developed a list of key messages that we encourage CFFM members to think about and share with their local M.P.s, the Ministers of Canadian Heritage and Foreign Affairs as well as the Prime Minister. The messages are:

- Our local museum is incredibly popular within our community and to tourists (provide evidence, ie. total visits per year, number of tourists, etc.) Note: This can be adapted to reflect the core strengths of the local museum.
- Our museum attracts businesses to invest in this community (give examples) and enhances our quality of life. It is a “must see” attraction for tourists and serves as a centre of meaning, learning and exchange for the local community (xx number of tourists, xx school tours, etc.) Note: This can be adapted to reflect the core strengths of the local museum.
- Specific recommendation to the MP: Canada needs a clear policy and federal support for the cultural and arts sector. Ad hoc programs and arbitrary program cuts are not a good basis for a sustainable future. Remind them of the promises by all parties including the Conservatives for a new Museums Policy and more funding - not less.

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THE GARDINER MUSEUM OF CERAMIC ART

The Museum opened in Toronto in 1984, a gift to the public from George and Helen Gardiner.

Since then many pieces have been added to the initial ceramics from the Gardiners' extensive personal collection. Pieces range from around 2500 BCE to the 21st century. Ceramics from the Ancient Americas, Italian majolica, English delftware, Chinese blue and white, Japanese kakiemon, Meissen, du Paquier, English and French porcelain, and 20th and 21st century *objets d'art* fill the Museum with colour, beauty and brilliance.

Highlights include a stunning collection of *commedia dell'arte* figures, an exceptional Meissen tea and chocolate service in its original travelling case, the amusing 'Monkey Orchestra' and an exquisite collection of French scent bottles. The Gardiner is renowned, not only for its ceramics, but for its education and outreach programs and its research facilities.

Since the Gardiner opened, its volunteers have been an integral and important part of its activities. The ninety active volunteers and forty sustaining contribute about 15,000 hours each year.

The volunteers fill many roles. They staff the front desk and the shop. Docents offer free tours three times a week and are available for booked tours. The Archives/Library Committee keep the history of the Museum alive and accessible to the staff, volunteers and the public. Archives volunteers keep the records of the Museum in a variety of media, and Library volunteers search out appropriate publications for inclusion in the library, assist researchers and docents, and open the library to the public. Members of the Meet and Greet Committee answer general questions. The Admissions and Placement Committee screen, interview and place potential volunteers. After a three-month training period, successful candidates are invited to join the Volunteer Committee. The Membership Services Committee maintains the lines of communication through e-mail, regular mail and the twice-yearly *Harlequin News*.

The Fundraising Committee holds a "Joy of Ceramics" Luncheon every spring. The Volunteers have just

completed a significant pledge to the recent building fund, 'All Fired Up!' and have assisted in the publication of a number of books. Their "Pot of Gold" project enabled children, who otherwise could not afford clay classes, to attend.



The Gardiner Volunteer Committee instituted the Helen Gardiner Scholarship to be awarded annually to an elementary or secondary school student who shows a love and talent for working in clay.

All those who have been associated with the Gardiner were profoundly saddened at the death of Helen Gardiner in July. She was the heart and soul of the Museum. An extraordinary woman, who after her husband George's death in 1994 took on a leadership role that vitalized fund-raising for the expansion of the building and the collections. She was a recipient of the Order of Canada for her significant contribution to the cultural life of the country. Helen Gardiner's warm and sparkling personality, her dedication and unstinting generosity contributed enormously to the success of the Gardiner. She will be missed.

The Gardiner is a very special place for those of us who work and volunteer there. It is a veritable jewel of a museum filled with fascinating and beautiful ceramics that vividly tell the story of cultures and life for over three millennia through that most malleable, tactile and living of elements, clay.

Bernice Klasky

For more information about the Museum, see www.gardinermuseum.com

In memoriam Val Cronyn

Vallière (Val) Cronyn died last April 13th. From the very start of CFFM forty years ago Val was an active and caring supporter, always involved in all aspects of CFFM's activities. She held many executive positions including President and Treasurer. She will be fondly remembered and missed by all who knew her.

IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS

The publication "In the Company of Friends" celebrating fifty years of volunteering at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa is indeed a celebration of a proud history of volunteering.

It is a delightful title, and the cover gives one a feeling of happy anticipation before even opening the book. The content, which is well displayed and includes many wonderful photographs, is a testament as to why volunteers have become so necessary to many museums and art galleries throughout the country. With amazing dedication, hard work and obvious enjoyment, the story unfolds demonstrating that the volunteers over the fifty years have provided the National Gallery of Canada with amazing physical and financial aid as well as being ambassadors for the Gallery wherever they went.

The book outlines the history of the group and the many areas where they have so successfully made a difference. The story of the Rideau Chapel Restoration is inspiring and shows, not only what can be achieved despite a tendency towards governmental disregard of the importance of heritage, but also how important the role of a well organized volunteer group can be.

In addition to retelling the history of the group the book includes some tips, based on experience, which would be of use to other groups on how to organize certain functions, such as a day trip or a study group.

Altogether a highly commendable publication in celebration of a significant milestone which augurs



well for the future. One can only say, carry on the good work to sustain the institution, and, more than anything, continue to enjoy. As all dedicated volunteers know, volunteering is a two way street, one gets back as much, and often more, as one gives.

The National Gallery of Canada is lucky to have had, and to continue to have, the support of such an accomplished, dedicated group.

In the Company of Friends is available at \$20 per copy (plus \$5 for shipping and handling) from

Volunteers' Circle of the National Gallery

Box 333, Station A

Ottawa, ON K1N 8V3

Payment by cheque, MasterCard or VISA

May also be ordered by e-mail from volunteers.circle@gallery.ca or

directly from the National Gallery's web site: www.shopngc.ca.

Jo Breyfogle

BILL BARKLEY on Board of Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Bill, a member of the CFFM Advisory Council, has been selected by the Federal Heritage Minister to sit on the board of this new museum.

LOUISE RICKENBACKER retires

Louise joined the Board of CFFM in 1998 and became a member of the Advisory Council in 2004. Louise edited *Communiqué* from 1995 to 1998 and acted as CFFM representative in Ottawa and at

several national and international meetings. Louise has now officially retired. However, we do look forward to Louise continuing as an active member of CFFM.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Cynthia Armour Barbara Bloor

Margaret Luxton Rima Zubas

The Campbell House Museum

WEB SITES OF INTEREST

www.virtualmuseum.ca, is worth exploring. The site is produced by the Canadian Information Heritage Network (CHIN). Material may be used for educational and personal purposes. Certain expectations re copyright apply.

www.museumsofcanada.ca offers an good selection of gifts from Canadian museum shops.

You will always find interesting and pertinent reports by Hill Strategies Research Inc. on www.hillstrategies.com - *Social Effects of Culture: Detailed Statistical Models*, the 23rd report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series provides strong evidence of the social effects of culture through detailed statistical models of six social indicators, such as volunteering, donating, sense of belonging, etc. Among the cultural activities, visits to public art galleries or historic sites each have a positive impact on five of the six social behaviours under the microscope.

CONFERENCES

Ontario Museums Association

Nov. 5 - 7, 2008 in Ottawa, ON

On the theme of *Turning great ideas into result*

www.museumsonario.com

Canadian Museums Association

62nd National Conference

March 25 - 28, 2009 in Toronto, ON

www.museums.ca

WFFM Council Meeting & General Assembly

April 30 - May 3, 2009 in Glasgow, U.K.

www.museumsfriends.com

National Docent Symposium

October 14 - 17, 2009 in Toronto

On the theme of *Crossing Borders: Bridging Cultures*

If your organization has some exciting program, new solutions to an old problem or an innovative idea that you want to share with other docents, contact

www.ago.net/NDS2009/call/

If you have some news that you would like to share with our readers, do get in touch with the editor at aucourant@museums.ca. Deadline for submission of copy for the Winter 2009 issue is December 1, 2008

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- Museums are an important part of branding a community and setting it apart from others. This helps in marketing the community at home and internationally in a globalized market.
- A comprehensive cultural policy is something that most countries recognize as important: it creates a broader understanding of what Canada stands for and its economic potential. We have only to look as far as the U.S. to see how powerful culture can be in building international profile and creating awareness.

We strongly suggest that CFFM members share their concerns about what is happening to cultural funding in general and specifically heritage funding. Addresses for M.P.s can be found at:

<http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Current&Language=E>

The addresses of Ministers and the Prime Minister can be found at:

<http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainCabinetCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Current&Language=E>

It is CFFM policy to respect and protect personal information and an individual's right to privacy in compliance with current legal requirements. CFFM does not lend or sell its membership information.

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