



# *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.

**Summer 2008**

## **A NEW BEGINNING**

**F**rom its beginning in 1977, the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums (CFFM) has been committed to promoting museums and Canadian heritage, educating Canadians about the value of museums, encouraging volunteer participation in the museum community and championing cooperation and communication among individuals, museums and related organizations. CFFM speaks for all Canadian museum volunteers and friends.

Since 1996, CFFM has had a strategic alliance with the Canadian Museums Association. Our annual general meeting normally takes place during the CMA's annual Conference and the Carol Sprachman Memorial Lecture sponsored by CFFM is part of the Conference program.

In May of this year CFFM and CMA concluded a new strategic agreement that will result in CFFM relocating its operational office from Toronto to Ottawa to share space with the CMA. We remain an independent organization but will benefit from being

able to work more closely with the CMA on issues that concern the museum community in Canada.

We are now preparing to launch a research project in 2008-2009 that will improve our understanding of the voluntary sector within the Canadian museum community. What do museum volunteers need from us, what assistance can we give to them - in professional development, the exchange of information, recruiting volunteers and recognizing their contribution? We expect that the results of this research will lead to the strengthening of our Canadian volunteer network, so we can mobilize their voice in support of progressive museum policy and programs.

Our strength is based on our members. We need your cooperation, your comments and suggestions. The more active members we have, the more effective we will be in representing your interests.

*Peter Homulos*

## **CFFM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2008**

**T**he thirty-first Annual General Meeting of the CFFM, held in Ottawa on May 23rd, 2008, marked a milestone for our organization. At that time, members gave approval to the Board of Directors to sign a Partnership Agreement with the

Canadian Museums Association (CMA). The co-Vice Presidents reported on the success of the Carol Sprachman Memorial Lecture at the 2008 CMA Annual conference in Victoria, B.C. The speaker was Australian DOM Christopher Power,

who, with a great sense of humour, outlined the work of his community in establishing a thriving heritage site. Thanks to long-time members Jocelyn Shaw and Suzie Stohn for organizing this, and to Bill Barkley for his support at the Conference.

During the past year, representation was made to the Federal Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages on the negative impact that cancellation of Heritage Canada's artifact transportation program will have on museums and galleries. Also, regarding the Government's decision to determine the future home of the National Portrait Gallery through a competitive bidding process and its failure to address such questions as maintenance and conservation.

While overseeing CFFM's operations, Vice President Jean Read renewed efforts to increase the organization's membership base and rationalize and update the renewal process. Vice-President Martha Wilder has also spent considerable time researching and developing funding opportunities and representing CFFM on the Planning Committee for the 2009 CMA Conference in Toronto.

Advocacy Chair Bill Peters identified a key issue which needs to be addressed - the lack of a National Museums Policy. He suggested that in the event of a federal election, CFFM should take the opportunity to pressure the incoming Government on this. He also proposed a shift in strategy to demonstrate how heritage institutions can support governments to achieve their objectives. It was noted that the current Federal Government, while not developing a national policy, has tended to react to specific programs, such as a matching endowment. It was agreed that CFFM members should be encouraged to invite candidates to their institutions to provide visibility to their community and to draw attention to the institution's needs. Our thanks to Bill Peters for his work in preparing material for advocacy on behalf of CFFM and its members.

In tabling her report as Treasurer, Barbara Bloor stressed the need to seek new revenue sources. Costs to move operations to Ottawa were expected to be minimal and are included in the recently approved federal Young Canada Works Program. Funds from this program include the provision to hire a student to carry out research and assist with the transition.

Finally, a slate of twelve nominees to the new 2008-09 Board of Directors was presented by the Nominating Committee (Jean Read and Martha Wilder).

Three new Board members have been added - Cynthia Armour, Marie Tremblay McNiven and Doris Smith - and the earlier appointment of Barbara Bloor to fill a vacancy was confirmed. The complete Board of Directors, with their assigned portfolios, is:

Cynthia Armour  
William Barkley  
Barbara Bloor (Treasurer)\*  
Joan Goldfarb (WFFM Liaison)  
Peter Homulos (National Director)\*  
Wally Kozar (Executive Secretary)  
Marie Tremblay McNiven (WFFM Liaison)  
Bill Peters (Advocacy)\*  
Jean Read (Vice-President)\*  
Margot Magee Sackett  
Doris Smith (Public Relations)  
Martha Wilder (Vice-President)\*

\* Members of the Executive Committee

Having resigned from the Board this year, former Directors Jo Breyfogle (Toronto, Ontario) and Danielle Lecours (Montreal, Quebec) were confirmed as members of the Advisory Council. This now comprises ten long-time supporters of CFFM who provide advice and assistance to the Board.

*Jean Read*

## CFFM Supports a National Capital Portrait Gallery

CFFM, the national voice of Canada's 300,000 friends of museums, galleries and heritage sites, is firmly committed to a National Portrait Gallery in the National Capital Region, on the condition that it also serve Canada's regions.

CFFM views the proposed new National Portrait Gallery as another basic building block in solidifying Canadian's understanding of their history, heritage and culture. Together with the national museums in the NCR, the gallery would enable all citizens to better appreciate the historic personalities who have made this country what it is today. The ability to study our material cultural, natural and artistic history as represented in the museums of Civilization, Nature, Science and Technology, and in the National Gallery, will be complemented by the stories of the many great men and women who played important roles in the evolution of this nation.

CFFM believes that it is fundamental that the National Portrait Gallery be located in the National Capital Region, and that it have the capacity to serve Canada's regions through satellite facilities and other means including the use of technology. The logic of siting a National Portrait Gallery in the national capital has been recognized by most major countries, and those who have been enriched by visits to such outstanding institutions as the Portrait Gallery in London fully support the importance of its location at the heart of the nation. However, we also believe that Canada can add a special dimension to its National Portrait Gallery by ensuring that it serves regional satellites – physical and virtual – in selected key locations across the country. This innovation would ensure that Canadians who are not able to visit the national capital would also enjoy access to the Gallery's collection and the stories it tells about our nation.

There are serious negative consequences that would flow from a decision to locate the Gallery in another Canadian centre. Cost is one factor and an important one - there is no question that the additional costs of



*Rally of Friends of the Portrait Gallery of Canada organized by MP Paul Dewar.  
Photo: Paul Couvrette*

packing, shipping and the inevitable charges for restoration of materials damaged in transit would add significantly to the operating budget of the Gallery. But of even greater concern is the risk of irreparable damage in moving fragile, irreplaceable works of art from Ottawa to another location.

This risk is always of concern to those charged with the responsibility of protecting the national collections. Today it is of even greater concern, as the government has just closed down Canada's specialized fine art moving agency – the Exhibit Transportation Service. Our national institutions will now be required to depend on commercial movers, increasing the cost and substantially increasing the risks associated with any move. The same costs and risks would apply to the National Portrait Gallery should it be located outside of Ottawa.

CFFM joins with the thousands of concerned Canadians who have urged the government to ensure that our new National Portrait Gallery is created in Ottawa, the national capital. CFFM urges all of its members to make their views on this important issue known to the federal government by contacting their local Member of Parliament, or by writing to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Hon. Josée Verner, at:

Minister of Canadian Heritage  
15 Eddy Street  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0M5

*Bill Peters*

## Work under way and looking ahead

The CFFM is planning a study of museum, gallery and heritage site volunteers, in an effort to identify their interests and needs and help build the tools to enable them to be as effective as possible when acting as links between museums and the communities they serve. The Canadian Museum Association estimates that these organizations represent over 300,000 volunteers. The discrepancy between the CMA and Statistics Canada estimates (300,000 vs. 46,400) of the size of this volunteer community underscores the need for a study. The purpose of this survey is to reach out to volunteers who have not traditionally been involved in our organization. The project will allow the CFFM to address the issue of volunteers in the heritage sector and develop better programs that can help to reverse the decrease in numbers of volunteers that is at present taking place across Canada. We also propose to rebuild and strengthen our web site, to further develop contact lists, to build new links with key groups in the volunteer sector and make them more aware of the programs and services of CFFM.

### Who benefits?

This study will ultimately benefit the people of Canada, who will have improved access to their collective heritage. All people who volunteer in museums and heritages sites will benefit from this study. Furthermore, the museum and

heritage sites in which these people volunteer will benefit because their volunteer base will be better supported. There are over 2000 museums and heritage sites in Canada that will be included in this project and benefits will accrue to the communities in Canada in which these institutions are located.

*We invite your comments and observations - please contact **Peter Homulos** directly by e-mail at [homulos@sympatico.ca](mailto:homulos@sympatico.ca).*

**Zehra Mawani**  
*CFFM Development Officer*

## WFFM CONGRESS in Jerusalem

CFFM Board member **Joan Goldfarb** will be representing Canadian Friends of Museums at the XIII World Congress of the World Federation of Friends of Museums from Sept. 21 - 26 in Jerusalem. For more information on the WFFM visit their web site at [www.museumfriends.com](http://www.museumfriends.com). If you are planning to participate, please contact our office.

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