



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

ISSN 1915-0229

Winter 2009

A LETTER TO THE HON. JAMES MOORE

Our Vice Presidents, Jean Read and Martha Wilder have written to the Hon. Moore to congratulate him on his appointment as Minister of Canadian Heritage. They state that “Our members look forward to working with you and your Ministry in ensuring that all Canadians are aware of our cultural heritage and its importance to our nation.” They express the hope that the Minister “will want to reach out to those who work in our museums and other heritage institutions.”

They explain that “Canadians have a special relationship with our museums. Fifty-nine million visits are made to Canadian museums every year. Museums exist in every Canadian community and contribute significantly to the identity and economic activity of that region. Museums are the guardians and presenters of the Canadian story, showcasing our values of freedom, democracy and human rights. They serve as a window on the world for Canadians while showcasing Canadian talent, achievements and history to millions of foreign visitors each year.

They point out that, “In many respects, museums share common objectives with the Government of Canada and there is a long history of collaboration and support that has enabled our heritage institutions

to develop programming and capabilities that are the envy of many other nations. That being said the reality today is that our museums are struggling and need a supportive policy environment that will enable this capacity to be resuscitated.”

CANCELLATIONS

On November 7, 2008 the Department of Canadian Heritage announced that the selection process for a permanent home for the Portrait Gallery of Canada was terminated. Four proposals had been received (two in Edmonton, one in Calgary and one in Ottawa). “Unfortunately, none of these proposals met the Government’s requirements” said Minister Moore. “In this time of global economic instability, it is important that the federal government continue to manage its own affairs prudently and pragmatically. The selection process failed to meet the best interests of both the Portrait Gallery and taxpayers. We have therefore decided not to pursue this project at this time.” Minister Moore is unapologetic about the nearly \$45 million in cuts to heritage, arts and cultural sectors - see article on this subject by Peter Homulos in the Autumn 2008 issue of *au courant*.

WORLD FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF

MUSEUMS CONGRESS IN JERUSALEM

Hosted by the International Council of the Israel Museum
in September 2008

Marie Tremblay McNiven and Joan Goldfarb represented CFFM at the Congress of the World Federation of Friends of Museums.

They were pleased to see that there was a significant group of Canadians in attendance and they held a number of informal meetings to discuss CFFM. Many of the Canadians felt that a coordinated front for the promotion of Canadian museums was very important and that CFFM could play such a role.

The theme of the Congress - *"The Relationship between Museums, Friends and Volunteers"* provided the opportunity to explore challenges that are faced by museums and their supporters now and in the future.

The main objective of WFFM is to promote the idea of Friends of Museums. "Friends" is understood in many different ways by the various delegations. It includes volunteers and members as well as potential donors. The role of Friends ranges from institutional supporter in both time and donations to bridge-building and cultural education roles within the community. The wide range of interpretations reflects both the state of evolution in various countries between their cultural institutions and their communities, and the relative maturity of the Friends movements within them.

WFFM represents 34 countries and about two million Friends world-wide. WFFM has important links to ICOM (International Council of Museums) and through ICOM to UNESCO. At present, the WFFM is working with ICOM to create a charter of principles on sustainable tourism.

WFFM has created a *Code of Ethics* for people who provide unpaid work to museums in any capacity. This document is available in several languages and is used extensively around the world.

Of particular relevance to CFFM were sessions on

"Fruitful Collaborations between Museums and Friends", chaired by the British FFM President Norah Dunbar. These sessions featured a most interesting presentation by Valerie Cooper, CEO of the Art Gallery of Calgary and Donale Gandossi, Chair of the AGC Board of Directors.

Canada was also represented in a panel focused on "The Challenge of Recruiting and Maintaining Membership" via an excellent presentation by Mark Trask, Chief, Membership and Annual Giving, National Gallery of Canada Foundation.

Some of the ideas explored during the sessions:

- There should be no lines between professionals, friends and volunteers;
- How to use survey results to ensure that governments understand the full significance of volunteers and to discover what volunteers want to enrich their experiences;
- Ways to reward members and volunteers;
- Ideas for creating new kinds of volunteers to capture young audiences. The creation of hosts rather than docents;
- The implication of free entry to museums to the public and the institution;
- The numbers of members and volunteers are a barometer of the health of the institution;
- Web friends and web members are not the real supporters, so care should be taken not to diminish the experience of live participants.

Of course, there were many more sessions and ideas that were discussed and explored. In addition, delegates had the pleasure of visiting heritage sites that were available to all participants of the Congress. If you are interested in learning more about the Congress, please e-mail us at cffm@museums.ca

Joan Goldfarb and Marie Tremblay McNiven

BOOK REVIEW

A new publication from the American Association of Museum Volunteers is a soft cover 100-page

book, *Transforming Museum Volunteering*. This is a practical guide, well laid out, with many examples, for museum staff and volunteer managers, which illustrates the need for new approaches to engage volunteers in the 21st century. Volunteerism has changed in recent years to encompass a much broader range of people with very varied interests, cultural background, levels of education and time available - this guide is an excellent tool with which to recruit, train and reward today's volunteers.

Transforming Museum Volunteering, by Ellen Hirzy, for the AAMV, is published by AuthorHouse. Visit www.aamv.org to purchase. Price: \$29.95 US.

Gillian Moine

The theme of the Fall 2008 issue of the *Queen's Quarterly* is "Museums and Mystery". It features an in-depth interview with Victor Rabinovitch, President of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, articles by Robert Fulford ("The Harsh Judgment of the Museum") and Margaret MacMillan, Robert Bothwell and Randall Hansen on the Canadian War Museum - Bomber Command Controversy.

NEW MEMBERS

The Association of Friends of the Billings Estate Museum
Canadian Museum of Nature

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The Volunteers' Circle of the National Gallery of Canada was honoured with the "Outstanding Philanthropic Group Award" by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Ottawa Chapter, during the AFP Philanthropy Awards Dinner on November 12th. The National Gallery nominated the Circle for this honour in recognition of its 50th anniversary.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The mandate of the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums is to represent volunteers in all provinces and regions across Canada. If

you would like to participate as a Board Member or wish to nominate a friend, please contact CFFM at 613-567-0099, ext. 260 or e-mail a brief résumé to cffm@museums.ca by January 15th.

CFFM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2009 at 4:30 pm in the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto during the CMA National Conference.

CANADIAN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE - March 25-28, 2009

Some highlights:

- Tuesday, March 24 at 4:30 pm: social kick-off events include a Walking tour of corporate art collections and a Premiering gallery tour at the Royal Ontario Museum.
- Wednesday, March 25 offers full-day and half-day workshops, including board development and fund-raising.
- Thursday, March 26 - Chantal Hébert, Political Commentator and Columnist, will give the keynote address, *What Road Will We Take?* Our member, Joan Goldfarb, will be moderating a panel on *Donors, \$\$\$, Collections*, while Ken Armstrong, O.M.C., chairman of one of our institutional members, the Canadian Museum of Nature, will moderate a panel on *Effective Leadership: CEOs and Trustees*.
- Friday, March 27 - educational sessions continue.
- Saturday, March 28 at the Plenary Session from 9:00 - 10:00 am Jennifer Corriero will give this year's **Carol Sprachman Lecture**. Her topic is *Fully Wired....Fully Mobile: Generation Y*. Admission to this lecture is free to members of CFFM - a new membership benefit.

For easy online registration and full conference details, visit www.museums.ca. Note that members of CFFM are entitled to register at the CMA rate!



TRANSFORMATION AGO

The transformed Art Gallery of Ontario opened to the public on November 14, 2008. In preparation, Gallery Guides and volunteers were offered retraining and placement. The majority elected to continue in the new space. The Gallery expects to enroll between 600 to 650 active volunteers to deal with large numbers of visitors who will be attracted by Frank Gehry's innovative architectural design.

WEB SITES OF INTEREST

www.preservation.gc.ca is the site for you if you are interested in preserving your family treasures, heirlooms and works of art. The *Preserving my Heritage* web site of the Canadian Conservation Institute provides:

- advice on how to care for books, silver, paintings, videotapes, and more
- information about careers in conservation
- a great training tool for museum staff and volunteers

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. Letters may be edited to fit the space available. Deadline for submission of copy for the Spring 2009 issue is February 2nd.

FOREVER YOUNG: VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE - JOAN MCKIM, C.M.

The 2008 CMA Award for Volunteerism was given to a very special volunteer who has spent 25+ years cataloguing for the McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal. One of her most important achievements has been cataloguing the illustrations in the *Canadian Illustrated News* (published from 1869 to 1883).

Mrs. McKim received the Order of Canada in 2000 for giving more than seventy years to serving her community, revitalizing the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Symphony Orchestra and Welfare Federation. At age 95 she was still continuing her work of cataloguing for the McCord.

CORRECTIONS

Bill Barkley was misidentified in the last issue of *au courant*: Bill is a member of the Board of CFFM.

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.

CFFM is a charitable organization registered under # BN 11883 0876 RR 0001

au courant is the newsletter published by Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums

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