



# *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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## **The CFFM — Quo vadis?**

**C**FFM should be the national voice to promote museums for the benefit of all Canadians. We have existed in Canada for over thirty years. Our hope is to continue to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among Canadian and international Friends. We would also like to be able to promote and enhance the volunteer component of our museum community. Our mission is to provide resources for Friends of museums whether they are trustees, docents, 'operational' volunteers or simply individuals who are passionate about the preservation of our heritage.

At a recent meeting of the Ontario Museums Association, Peter Homulos, our National Director, lead a session to discuss the traditional relationship between volunteers and staff in the museum setting. He explored some of the tensions that have existed over the years. Many institutions in this country were run by volunteers. Sometimes the evolution to institutions run by paid staff was not easy. Fears have existed on both sides but mostly volunteers are valued by their institutions and the value of volunteer work is recognized and appreciated.

There are estimated to be over 300,000 volunteers in Canada. Volunteers can do what institutions cannot. They have a voice that can be heard and that should be effective to bring about change and support. They are a most valued asset.

They are our most passionate advocates and link institutions to the communities they serve.

### **Our path forward**

CFFM now wants to understand the needs of our museums and their volunteers in a much deeper way than we have been able to in the past. We are hoping to survey museums and volunteers and through the information gathered create a strategy to strengthen the volunteer experience and help our volunteers become better advocates for the museum community. Based on your response our goal will be to develop programmes to meet your expressed need.

To accomplish any of this we need your support and renewed membership. We also need you to go to your institutions and friends and help us make the case for wider membership. There is so much that can be accomplished. The need is real. But the need cannot be met without your participation.

We are always open and receptive to your responses. Please feel free to share your ideas and opinions re CFFM either by participating in our survey or simply by letting us know what you are doing in your museums or community.

Our path ahead is not easy, but it is important and together much can be accomplished.

***Joan Goldfarb  
Co-President, CFFM***

# What is this World Federation of Friends of Museums?

By Daniel Ben-Natan, President of WFFM

When I was first elected Treasurer of the WFFM (Bruges, 2002), my friends and colleagues asked me: "What is this World Federation of Friends of Museums?" Since then I have learned that it is too much of a well-kept secret to most people.

So, what is the World Federation of Friends of Museums?

The purpose of the WFFM (formed in Brussels June 15, 1975) as defined in its By Laws is: "... to foster international cooperation between Associations of Friends of Museums in order to promote mutual understanding, to exchange information and to pool the experience acquired with the purpose of intensifying the life and developing the function of such associations to benefit the museums and the public."

Or, as defined on our web site ([www.museumfriends.com](http://www.museumfriends.com)) "the aim of the WFFM is to promote and spread the idea of friends of museums worldwide. The enrichment of museums and the safeguard of our cultural heritage are central to all the activities carried out by the Federation."

Lofty and worthy goals, undoubtedly.

The next step in my education was to understand that there are tens of thousands of museums worldwide of very differing size and content. Coming from a world-class encyclopedic museum of Art, Ethnography, Archeology, etc. (The Israel Museum, Jerusalem) with a collection of some 500,000 artifacts, I began to realize that

there are museums of every possible subject (truly — every possible content) and size ranging from major museums to one room installations in very remote places.



Daniel Ben-Natan

Seven years later, I have grown to better know the museum world in its wonderful richness and diversity, to respect the WFFM and its members and all the hundreds of thousands of men and women of every race, religion, age, etc. who volunteer their talent, time and passion in supporting their museums in every way possible.

So, what is the WFFM after all?

It is first and foremost composed of National Federations of Friends in 18 countries: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the USA.

It has 27 Associate Members (Associations of Friends of specific museums) in 21 countries in Chile, Columbia, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Luxemburg, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines,

Romania, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, USA and Uruguay, as well as individual members all over the world.

This is truly a World Federation!

The WFFM is governed by a General Assembly and Council which meet once a year and an Executive Committee composed of the seven officers of the Federation.

The 2009 Council and General Assembly were held April 30 - May 3, 2009 in Glasgow, while the next Council and General Assembly will be held in Lisbon, May 20-23, 2010. For non-Council friends this is a wonderful opportunity to experience Lisbon with an emphasis on Museums with like-minded friends from all over the world (*Editorial Note: you will find detailed information on the Lisbon meeting on the CFFM web site at [www.cffm-fcam.ca](http://www.cffm-fcam.ca)*).

We also hold a World Congress every three years. The last Congress was held in Jerusalem in September 2009 and the next one will be held in Genoa in the Spring of 2011.

In Glasgow I was elected by secret ballot as President of the WFFM for a three-year term.

A bit on who I am:

I am Canadian born (from Winnipeg) and still regard myself as a Canadian Israeli or Israeli Canadian. I am an active professional serving as Vice President for Development and International Relations of the Israel Museum of Jerusalem.

### **The WFFM — Quo vadis?**

We intend to make the WFFM much more visible and relevant to the cultural and museum world. We hope to better serve our members by improving internal communications, by establishing a "data bank" of knowledge and expertise to be made available to our membership in particular but also to all museum friends and volunteers worldwide.

We hope to increase the

membership of the WFFM and to offer our members relevant benefits. We will act to increase co-operation with UNESCO and ICOM, the organization of museum professionals, who are our natural partners in supporting our museums. Thus there is already a very productive partnership with ICOM in the areas of Sustainable Tourism and International Museums Day.

To you, the individual friend,

supporting your beloved museum, our message is one of admiration, support and friendship. Perhaps you can derive encouragement in the knowledge that you are not alone, but rather part of an ever growing group of friends (what a wonderful concept!) worldwide, making their mark in supporting and strengthening culture, art and education.

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### **Honoring Dr. Sean Murphy, C.M., M.D.**

**A**t the September 25th CFFM Board Meeting, held in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Dr. Sean Murphy was nominated our first Companion Trustee. Dr. Murphy played a notable role in his many years as Chair of CFFM, during which time we had an increase of both museum and individual members, plus the important publication of "Significant Treasures". He kept in touch weekly with the National Director in Toronto, first Carol Sprachmann, latterly Suzie Stohn.

Of equal note he was also highly regarded by all in the World Federation of Friends of Museums, serving as Chair of the North American Region. A quote from Jocelyn Shaw's words of appreciation prior to the nomination: "Sean brought to every meeting a seriousness of purpose, which was tempered by flashes of humour. Sean never hesitated to speak out for something he thought could be done better, or to press for concrete action when he felt matters were lagging."

In latter years Dr. Murphy stressed his particular interest - drawing in museums. His dream has been accomplished, for his lovely book "*Dare to Draw / La passion du dessin*" attests to how deep this interest lay. We congratulate him for such an achievement!



*Joan Goldfarb, Marie Tremblay McNiven, Dr. Sean Murphy and Jocelyn Shaw in Montreal*

Dr. Murphy is a graduate of Harvard and the McGill Medical School. Later he was Professor of Ophthalmology at McGill for more than 30 years, where he is currently *Professor Emeritus*. He established the Sean Murphy Fellowship IFOS/ICO for Ophthalmology for future research into interocular tumours at McGill. He has headed numerous professional organizations including the Quebec Association of Ophthalmologists; is A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts; was President of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts from 1968-1978; and a director of numerous arts organizations including the Canada Council and the National Gallery of Canada. For these achievements, his philanthropy and

dedicated service to so many areas of Canadian life, Dr. Murphy was made a member of the Order of Canada and is a Queen's Jubilee Medal recipient. Little wonder we are proud to be able to appoint him as CFFM's first Companion Trustee.

**Jocelyn Shaw**  
**CFFM Advisory Committee**

## CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

*Membership has its privileges!* As a member of CFFM you are invited to attend two upcoming

### WFFM Meetings:

- North American Regional Meeting in Washington April 19 and 20.
- Council Meeting in Lisbon, May 20 - 23. You will find details on both meetings on our web site.

### Canadian Museums Association

- May 10 - 15, 2010 in St. John's, Nfld. and Labrador

This year's theme will be "Evolving Boundaries: Linking People, Place and Meaning." CFFM is again sponsoring the Carol Sprachman Lecture. This year's speaker will be Jeffrey Simpson.



In preparation for an Arts and Culture Summit organized by Ottawa Centre MP Paul Dewar, your Editor held a "kitchen table" discussion on November 1<sup>st</sup> at which 18 persons participated. It was decided that our priority #1 is keeping alive the dream of one day having an accessible and relevant Portrait Gallery of Canada.

Read more on the web.

**Tony Bowland** has been nominated to serve as interim member of the Board to fill a vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting.

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](mailto:aucourant@museums.ca).

Deadline for submission of copy for the Spring 2010 issue is February 1<sup>st</sup>. Articles and news items for our web site can be submitted at any time for consideration.

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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