



## No Culture, No Future: A Lecture by SIMON BRAULT in Ottawa

Simon Brault is a visionary with a passionate argument for the preservation of the arts in our cities. In a swiftly changing world where we can no longer trust economic growth, he feels that we must turn to culture in all its forms to live full and enriched lives and that all of us – the common citizenry – must take action to see that culture becomes the bedrock of our communities. “We live in interesting times”, he says. “We need artists to be the anchor in new ways to see the world.”

Vice-Chair of the Canada Council for the Arts and Director General of the National Theatre School, he accepted an invitation to speak about these ideas and his book *No Culture, No Future, (Le Facteur “C”)*, in a public forum and reception at the magnificent newly renovated Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa.

This free meeting on October 21 was an innovation in itself as it was sponsored by groups of volunteers who came together in a common cause for the first time: the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums, the Volunteers’ Circle of the National Gallery of Canada, the Friends of Library and Archives Canada, the Friends of the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Great Canadian Theatre Company.

“I was touched that such an invitation would come from groups of volunteers”, he said. “In so many

cases, if you don’t have volunteers to act as mediators between the artists and the public it is impossible to do anything significant. They are needed to fill gaps in knowledge, to bring people to a realization of the culture before them and how they can participate in it.”



He referred to his book as a “handbook” of ideas that can work and have been put in place by “cities who are poor in economic resources but rich in the arts. They have been through challenging times; they have found the need to imagine the future differently. People are starting to see that the artists are ahead of their time.”

He went on to make the point that artists are convinced of their role but they are working in isolation. Communities need to come together to get across the ideas that culture defines cities. The bureaucrats need to be convinced. The individual can play an important role, says Mr. Brault. “We need networking, people speaking to each other and in that way we can have convincing and profound arguments so that change can take place.” Civic pride in the rich diversity of culture can bring economic advantages.

He returns to the idea of concrete action with the example of the environmentalists. Children who talk about the need for change in the environment in schools have pressured their parents to use the recycling bins at the side of the road. They may not

have changed the world but they have done something positive for their own communities and lives.

Mr. Brault was the driving force behind the project to restore the Monument-National in Montreal and spearheaded the creation of the Journées de la culture which caught the public imagination and continues to grow as Culture Days in other Canadian cities as well. He is also a founding member and Chairman of Culture Montreal which champions the key role played by the arts and culture in defining and developing the city.

Perhaps he has a distinct message for organizations like ours. The Ottawa members of the CFFM played the organizing role in this unique merging of volunteer groups in this city. It resulted in a surge of enthusiasm that we were working together in making the meeting a success: an example of concrete action. It would be interesting to see what the results would be if we all did this in our region or community. Members of the CFFM will be able to hear Mr. Brault themselves when he delivers the Carol Sprachman lecture (sponsored by the CFFM) on April 12 during the CMA conference.

*Jean Seasons*

*About 250 people attended the lecture which was unanimously declared a success and worth making into an annual event. Everyone worked well together. The following report by Lise Broadbent, our volunteer coordinator, can serve as an example of how to involve volunteers.*

I offered to recruit and coordinate the volunteers needed for the event. I enjoyed the whole experience: it was enriching and pleasant in many ways.

What I did:

- sent the first call for volunteers one month ahead of the event
- responded in general terms about acceptance (or not) to each offer
- kept informed of the exact needs and conditions anticipated at the event (this enables me to evaluate the qualifications required)
- obtained input from Doris Smith about other volunteers in other organizations
- evaluated if the response was sufficient for the needs anticipated (it was). Some screening is necessary to ensure the volunteers meet minimum qualifications
- created a chart to show the times, tasks and location for each volunteer, using information collected and my knowledge of each volunteer for the best possible match
- one week prior to event, shared this chart (by e-mail) with all the volunteers registered: this makes them feel wanted and gives them information about their exact role
- requested arrival one hour prior to the event, for a brief training on the spot
- received additional comments and made necessary adjustments to the chart
- planned to have name tags for all volunteers
- informed them about parking conditions (location and possible reimbursement)
- assured volunteers that seats would be reserved for them when they arrived from their volunteer posts
- sent a "last-minute" reminder the day before the event
- prepared for myself a list of points to be covered when meeting volunteers for "training"

The day of the event:

- arrived early to survey the situation
- met with the volunteers (all of them showed up) as planned. The meeting spot was busy and loud. This is where the volunteers showed much-appreciated initiative, cooperation, creativity and commitment. They contributed to finding best options. The greeters at the main entrance were superb. For example, they gathered a few (blue) programs and held them in front of them to draw the crowd's attention. This made up for the limited signage in the Museum. At the elevators and in the reception/lecture halls, volunteers also evaluated best ways to help the public and did a wonderful job.



After the event:

- surveyed a few volunteers for their feedback. All were positive and pleased with their evening.
- sent a thank you note to all volunteers

*Lise Broadbent, Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteers' Circle of the NGC*

### **CFFM Celebrates Canadian Museums Day on Parliament Hill!**

**M**useum professionals and friends from across Canada met with over 75 members of Parliament and senators to make the case that Canada's museums require more substantial and stable federal support. CFFM board members Joan Goldfarb, Marie Senécal-Tremblay, Doris Smith, Yves Dagenais and Sylvie Morel each met with several MPs.

Participants presented one key message at this second annual event: the creation of a *Canadians Supporting their Museums Fund* to stimulate an increase in private sector (individual and corporate) support to Canada's museums and public art galleries. This innovative federal program would match private sector donations—dollar-for-dollar, to a ceiling—for both operational purposes and long-term endowments

The day culminated with a reception hosted by the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons.

Organized by the Canadian Museums Association (CMA), the Canadian Art Museums Directors' Organization (CAMDO), and the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums (CFFM), Canadian Museums Day recognizes the enormous contributions that museums make to our communities and to the economy.

Canada is home to over 2,500 museums that engage several hundred thousand friends and volunteers, employ over 24,000 Canadians and contribute \$650 million in direct salaries and wages. Museums educate 7.5 million school children annually and receive over 59 million visits per year. Tourist visits to museums contribute an estimated \$17 billion to Canada's economy.

#### **The Museum Volunteer Award: an Update**

This year's jury members are:

**Jo Breyfogle** (Toronto). Jo is currently Treasurer of the Honorary Trustees of the Royal Ontario Museum and a member of the CFFM Advisory Committee;

**Yves Dagenais** (Montreal). Yves is a Fellow of the Canadian Museums Association and a member of

the CMA Insurance Committee as well as a Board member of CFFM;

**Sylvie Morel** (Ottawa), President of ICOM Canada and National Director of CFFM;

**Marie Senécal-Tremblay** (Montreal), Board member of the Stewart Museum and Executive Director of Heritage Montreal as well as co-president of CFFM;

**Doris Smith** (Ottawa), editor of *au courant*.

The deadline for receipt of applications has been extended to December 15<sup>th</sup>.

For information please contact Sylvie Morel at [info@cffm-fcam.ca](mailto:info@cffm-fcam.ca).

### **News from the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM)**

**E**xtracts from a letter received from Daniel Ben-Natan, President of the WFFM:

Dear Friends:

Having just returned from the ICOM General Conference in Shanghai, China, I wanted to share with you the very good news relating to the WFFM's enhanced visibility both throughout ICOM, our natural partners, and in China. Having been invited to bring greetings before the Conference, I was able to introduce the WFFM to the ICOM Advisory Committee and membership. With some 3,360 participants from 120 countries this was the ICOM's largest General Conference ever... In partnership with the Chinese, we held a first ever Open Forum on museum volunteers within the ICOM General Conference which was well attended with a large group of Chinese volunteers very visible and welcome. .. I gave an overview on the subject and used this opportunity to focus on the centrality of the WFFM and its member Federations in the museum world.

...Of special interest to me was the ceremony of awarding of prizes to the top ten volunteers in China, from the several million (!) museum volunteers, and your President was given the honor of being part of the presentations. The forum and ceremony were held with simultaneous English/Chinese translation.

## CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

### Canadian Museums Association

April 12 – 17, 2011 in London, Ontario. This year's theme will be "Evolve or Die".

The CFFM is again sponsoring the Carol Sprachman Lecture. The speaker will be Simon Brault., who will give the opening keynote address at 4:30 pm on April 12<sup>th</sup>. His topic will be "No Culture, No Future".

### World Federation of Friends of Museums

The XIV World Congress of WFFM will be held in Genoa 18-22 September 2011. All CFFM members are entitled to attend. See our web site [www.cffm-fcam.ca](http://www.cffm-fcam.ca) for details.

### American Association of Museums

May 22 – 25, 2011 in Houston, Texas

### Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums Annual General Meeting

At 3:00 pm on Tuesday, April 12 at the Hilton Hotel in London, Ontario.

The CFFM is looking for candidates who are interested in joining the Board of Directors. Please forward your suggestions to Sylvie Morel at [info@cffm-fcam.ca](mailto:info@cffm-fcam.ca), to be forwarded to the Nominating Committee.

**Post Script:** *The United Arab Emirates have big plans – three enormous museums are being built in Abu Dhabi: a branch of the Guggenheim that is 12 times the size of the original in New York, a branch of the Louvre that will cost \$500,000,000 to build, also a deal has been struck with the British Museum to design exhibitions for a National Museum to be built on a similar scale.*

We have two **Facebook pages:** Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums (CFFM) and Fédération canadienne des amis de musées (FCAM). If you're a Facebook user, please go to the pages to see what we've included.

If you have some news that you would like to share with our readers, do get in touch with the editor at [dmsmith@ncf.ca](mailto:dmsmith@ncf.ca). Deadline for submission of copy for the Spring 2011 issue is February 1<sup>st</sup>. Articles and news items for our web site can be submitted at any time for consideration.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR MEMBERS

Starting with this issue, our newsletter, *au courant* will be published electronically. Printed copies will only be mailed out on request. Please let us know if you prefer to receive printed copies by mail.

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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