

SUMMARY BY JOHN HOBDAY - SUNDAY, MAY 26TH 10:30 AM

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CONFERENCE - UNIVERSITE DE MONCTON

PHILANTHROPY AND CULTURE SYMPOSIUM
"TRENDS IN PHILANTHROPY"

Bonjour. Thank you Mark (Kristmanson).

It has proven to be very difficult to condense this rich pre-conference "event" into a ten minute summary. I have prepared a much more complete account and will pass this on to Mark Kristmanson to add to the record of the proceedings of this Atlantic Cultural Space Conference.

Inevitably, in this subjective mini-summary, there will be omissions, and perhaps errors - so I will try to leave some time for other participants to make corrections to my personal account of our "Thursday at Mount Allison". And I would like to thank all of the participants in the philanthropy symposium. They stayed in their seats throughout the day and there was a real feeling of engagement. C'était une journée très chargée. Thursday was a packed, exhilarating and memorable day. In some ways it was normal - the wind blew across the marshes - and, of course, the sun shone! In some ways it was very different. There was a real sense of sharing across the provincial boundaries and the mindsets that have so often proven to be barriers to people in the Atlantic provinces achieving common goals. I also felt a greater degree of openness to listening to people who, like myself, are "from away" (even though I lived in the Maritimes for over 15 years). Everyone in the room was facing a common issue, which is essentially "we have invested a great deal of time and energy in painstakingly building up a wide range of not-for-profit performing arts organizations, galleries and museums - how are we going to sustain all of these worthwhile programs and institutions?"

We are moving from a long period of pioneering in cultural development - to a period that I would categorize as one of "creative consolidation" - a period in which to consolidate and build on the gains which have so painstakingly, and often painfully, been achieved. I really felt a new openness to the notion of sharing information and insights and resources and to working together so that the cultural richness of the Atlantic Region can flourish and be sustained.

After the gracious formal introductions by Christian Whelan, Chair of the New Brunswick Foundation for the Arts, Dr. Wayne MacKay, President of Mount Allison and Mayor Jamie Smith of Sackville, I had been asked to give a keynote address - actually it was called a "kick-off" address. Its title was "Making the Case for the Arts" - and the complete text will be made available to the organizers of this conference - and I hope it can soon be easily accessed on the internet - which will save me having to print copies. My major messages were: there is no magic prescription to attract significant private sector donations to arts and heritage organizations; the competition is fierce for scarce resources; the answer lies in relationship-building to cultivate the loyal, and hopefully generous, individuals who care about the art form and who feel a strong sense of ownership in the future of your organization. To succeed, fundraising organizations must place greater emphasis on effective management and governance (no donor wants to see their contributions go down a black hole) - and it will be essential to invest

in the skilled and well trained people needed for revenue generation - and back them with board support. They must be at the heart of your organization, and equipped to use the new technologies to build data bases which can be mined and turn ticket buyers into donors!

I listed many of the attributes of the arts to enhancing the quality of life in our communities - but cautioned that there is still a great deal of relentless advocacy to be done if we are to convince decision-makers and the public that what we in this room care about is valuable to the lives of all citizens.

If we are to move the arts and heritage to being seen as essential public services - it will require effective and on-going advocacy on the part of everyone who shares our passion.

In the sessions which followed, the symposium participants were rewarded with a rich mine of thoughtful and practical information and there was frequent reinforcement of some of the major themes.

In the first session, Floyd Dykeman, VP of External Affairs at Mount Allison, spoke of the growing competition for philanthropic dollars; donors are becoming much more focussed and strategic - so don't just articulate your needs - listen to theirs. Mary Keith, Director of Marketing for the Irving Group, provided valuable insights into the decision-making process regarding corporate donations and sponsorships and stressed they were not the same - basically make sure your proposal fits the interests of the company - and pay attention to recognizing the donor! Concluding the first session was Mike Doyle, representing the Sir James Dunn Foundation, he added a number of practical tips - they want to see the evidence of community support - if your community is not willing to support you - why should their foundation? They also want to be assured of sound fiscal management - and sound management skills that will deliver on promises.

During lunch, the delegates were given an opportunity to see part of a new video presentation, in both english and french versions, called "The Guardians"/"Les gardiens" produced by the Canadian Museums Association and giving valuable advice on the roles, responsibilities and functions of museum and gallery trustees.

In addition, over the lunch period, we were treated to an inspiring address by Antonine Maillet, a veritable tour de force by the writer and activist who has done so much to inspire and reinforce the richness of the culture of the Acadian people.

There were two sessions in the afternoon. The first was chaired by Ken MacLeod who has a great deal of experience in fundraising in this region. He noted that still only a very small proportion of donations were being directed towards the arts and suggested that arts organizations must change their attitude towards fundraising which still seems to be that "fundraising is dressed in overalls and looks like work"!

Sarah Iley, President of the Council for Business and the Arts in Canada, which represents many of the major corporations involved in support for the arts and heritage

organizations, showed the quite encouraging results of an Angus Reid study on public attitudes towards the arts. In early June, this material will be available on the CBAC's website: www.businessforarts.org. I urge you to make use of this in making your arguments for support.

Georgie Day spoke on the growing number of community foundations - there are now 120 in Canada - the fastest growing sector in the donor field with over \$1.4 billion in assets. Last years combined contributions totaled over \$70 million. Unfortunately, there are only 9 community foundations in Atlantic Canada. The Meighan Foundation is working on the development of community foundations in New Brunswick. You can obtain more information on this potentially valuable new source of support by accessing the website of Community Foundations Canada.

Allen Schelew, the chairperson of the Capital Theatre Foundation, wound up the session with a wonderfully honest appraisal of their major fundraising campaign - a case study of both right and wrong decisions. Mercifully, they have made more right than wrong ones and have reached the 50% mark in their \$3 million goal.

The final session, I am afraid I will not do justice to. It was called "Getting out from Under" - Stabilization; sustainability; capacity building and Governance. It was moderated by Pauline Theriault, who spoke of new ways of thinking and doing things and the importance to demonstrate that arts organizations can be well-organized and business-like.

Hubert Lussier, Director General of Arts Policy in the Department of Canadian Heritage outlined the new instruments of federal support which are part of the Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability program - CAHSP - announced last May by Prime Minister Chrétien and Heritage Minister Sheila Copps. The three components relate to: Endowment incentives; stabilization and capacity building. The details can be found on the Department's website or by contacting the department's excellent staff here in each province. (You are well served in this region by dedicated and committed public servants in the departement du patrimoine).

Hubert was followed by Allison Hounsell, on behalf of Dean Brinton, the Director of the Foundation for the Arts in Nova Scotia, the first arts stabilization program in the Atlantic region. The program is now fully operational and working on capacity building with 12 organizations in Nova Scotia.

She described the eligibility criteria, the assessment process and the technical assistance provided by their program to assist these organizations to become more viable and sustainable.

It is not an easy task and requires the full commitment of each organization to think and act more strategically for the long term. (Organizational and financial health will almost inevitably lead to being able to sustain the production of better quality programs and services for the benefit of future audiences).

The final presentation was by Alisa Palmer, a theatre director from New Brunswick, who recounted, in a wonderfully open and engaging manner her experiences in taking on and turning around the "Nightwood Theatre" in Toronto. As an artist she had to learn a new language, a language that business people and donors could understand. I won't attempt to capture the right and wrong decisions which she and her colleagues in this theatre by and for women made - suffice to say the organization has been re-born (as Alisa said, "one good thing they knew going in was that they couldn't make it any worse!") They set achievable goals, cut salaries - even cut out using post-it stickers! They revitalized a totally dispirited board, retired a serious deficit, created and maintained an operating surplus, increased the budget and the fundraising component, and finally, she quit while she was ahead! An inspiring example of what can be done, but also a sad example of how fragile many arts organizations allow themselves to become.

In my closing summation, on Thursday, I made reference to the fact that our Foundation, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the culture and sports secretariat of the Department of Education of the Province of New Brunswick are working in partnership to assist with the development of an arts stabilization program suited to the special needs of New Brunswick. I gather that Education Minister, Denis Furlong, also spoke of this in his greeting to you on Thursday.

What I wanted to add is that work is also proceeding on a stabilization program in Prince Edward Island - stay tuned! I also urge you to access valuable web sites such as the Cultural Management Institute at ccm.uwaterloo.com. A treasure chest of information available free with the touch of a few keys.

Our Foundation is currently placing a great deal of emphasis on the "Creative Management" project on which we are working with the Canadian Conference of the Arts; Cultural Human Resources Canada, and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Together we plan to address the critical issues of recruiting; providing fair compensation; quality professional development opportunities - and retention of the crucial management personnel needed to make it possible to sustain and develop the rich cultural vitality of Atlantic Canada.

Congratulations to Christian Whelan, Mark Kristmanson, Ian Lumsden and all who made the "Philanthropy and Culture Symposium" so rewarding. Merci, et à la prochaine.