



THE LE BULLETIN

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The world's a scene of changes...

Abraham Cowley 1618 - 1667

Welcome to a new year, and with it, my best wishes and sincere hope for a successful and prosperous year of development and growth for all our member institutions.

Elsewhere in the heritage community, the year has gotten off to a rough start. The Auditor General has urged the government to move ahead with its national heritage policy in order to protect its national collections and preserve its historic sites and parks before they are lost forever. John McAvity of the CMA has echoed the AG's sentiments and stated that conditions are even worse outside the federal jurisdiction. Case in point, the Ottawa Municipal Government, in its proposed budget, will cut 80 to 90% of its cultural budget, thus closing four municipal museums, and eliminating funding to six other community museums, eventually forcing them to close as well. There are days when we need to be eternally grateful for the small bit we do receive. I am reminded of this every day as I turn on the lights, and sit in my warm office.

The new year has also brought changes to the OMMC. As mentioned in the last bulletin, the contracts of all paid staff expired on 31 December 03, and the positions were re-staffed by competition. A search committee was convened and I am pleased to announce the successful candidates. Don Yaworsky has been hired as the new Executive Director, Martine Hunter as the new Administrative Assistant, and Arlene Doucette as the Newsletter Editor. All three have been members of the OMMC for a number of years, and many of you will remember them from previous courses. Short biographies are included elsewhere in the newsletter. Congratulations and welcome!

Dr Ken Reynolds chose not to reapply for the position of Executive Director, as he recently became a term employee (vice contract) at DHH, and he will no longer have the time to fulfill the responsibilities. Ken will continue as Curator of the Cameron Highlanders Museum, and will join us at the annual course. Ken worked diligently and conscientiously on our behalf over the past year, and we are very grateful for his efforts. Congratulations on your new position, and Bravo Zulu for your excellent work.

Major Michel Litalien has recently stood down as Treasurer, due to his recent appointment as acting CF Museum Liaison Officer (DHH 5). Michel served in this position for several years, and we extend our sincere thanks for a job well done. Michael Shortridge, of the Naval Museum of Manitoba has agreed to serve as interim.

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Arlene Doucette
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There are several other changes in the works. Arlene has been given carte blanche to make changes to the newsletter, and she will introduce a new column entitled "Identify the Artifact". Here is an opportunity to bring out those unidentified items from the back of the closet and have someone else tell you what they are. Also you may put forth questions pertaining to research, collections management or exhibition techniques that you may need answers. Remember this column will only work if you participate. Also anyone interested in having short histories, interesting articles or excerpts from your unpublished manuscript published, the OMMC Bulletin is an excellent venue.

The Bulletin in the past has made space available for anyone interested in advertising a business, services or museum. We are now offering this feature again. Please check with Arlene for the rates.

On the Administrative side, the Executive has proposed a database for all members, both individual and institutional. This database will streamline the workload of our staff, so please take a few minutes and answer all the questions on the membership renewals and course registration forms.

The Executive has also proposed a Listserv. This email service will allow the Executive to contact all members about general announcements, latest developments, urgent matters, deadlines, issues requiring a vote, etc with efficiency and speed. More details will be promulgated once it is set up. Please provide the OMMC with an email address (individual or institution) as requested on the membership and registration forms.

The Board members are also busy writing a new five-year plan. It should be ready for approval at the AGM.

In October, Vince, Ken, Sean and myself headed to Regina, Moosejaw and Saskatoon to conduct a recce for the 2004 course. This split location (Regina and Saskatoon) is uncharted water for us, but it will run smoothly and provide us many options for not only this course, but for future ones as well. Bill MacKay and his team have fine-tuned the details and have provided exceptional site visits. The dates are 16 to 20 August 2004. Accommodations will be at the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, there will be no double rooms at either site. More details will be forthcoming in the very near future.

Marilyn Gurney

UPCOMING EVENTS AND NOTABLE DATES

1 March, 2004

Deadline for Application for **The Canadian Battlefields Foundation 10th Annual Battlefield Study Tour.**

This year the focus is on Canada's role in the liberation of Normandy. The program is designed for men and women who are attending university, including graduate school, or are recent graduates, and who have a strong desire to learn more about the role Canadian forces played in the liberation of Europe. The tour will be 26 May- 12 June, 2004.

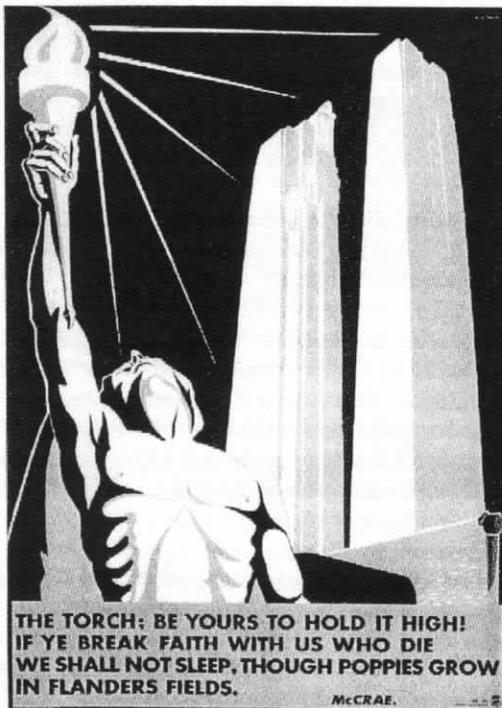
Contact: Terry Copp at tcopp@wlu.ca

Web site: www.canadianbattlefieldsfoundation.ca

9 April 2003

National Day of Remembrance for the Battle of Vimy Ridge

In 2003, April 9th was officially designated as a National Day of Remembrance for the anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Bill C-227, introduced by Brent St. Denis, M.P. for Algoma-Manitoulin, ensures that "throughout Canada, in each and every year, the ninth day of April shall be known as "Vimy Ridge Day".



April 9- Vimy Ridge Day

May 18, 2004-- Everywhere!

International Museum Day

What is your museum doing to celebrate?

May 25-30 2004, Quebec, QC

Canadian Association for Conservation Annual Conference and Workshop

Contact: Rebecca Bunch

Tel:(613)231-3977

Fax:(613)233-5438

Web site: www.cac-accr.ca/econf.html

22,23, 24 April 2004

Museums Association of Saskatchewan 2004 Annual Conference & Annual General Meeting

Kamsack, Saskatchewan

Contact: jan.morier@saskmuseums.org

http://www.saskmuseums.org/programs_services/whats_new.php>

April 28-May 2 2004, Quebec, QC

Canadian Museums Association Annual Conference

Theme: Looking In, Reaching Out

Contact: Sue-Ann Ramsden, Conference Coordinator

Tel: (416) 231-1251

E-mail: sramsden@museums.ca

Web site: www.museums.ca

May 6-10, 2004, New Orleans, LA, USA

American Association of Museums Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo™

Tel:(202) 289-1818

Fax:(202) 289-6578

E-mail: aaminfo@aam-us.org

Web site: www.aam-us.org/am04/index.htm

FIREARMS ACT UPDATE

The OMMC received the following from the Canada Firearms Centre, which is responsible for delivering information relating to the Firearms Act to the Canadian public. The Canada Firearms Centre can be reached at 1-800-731-4000, or by e-mail at cfc-cafc@cfc-cafc.gc.ca. Their website is www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca

Snapshot

The coming into force of certain *Firearms Act* regulations has been deferred.

The amnesty for prohibited 12 (6) handguns has been extended.

Deferral of Regulations

The regulations supporting the *Firearms Act* have been brought into effect in stages since December 1, 1998. Most regulations are now in effect. However, some regulations (or sections of certain regulations) that were scheduled to come into force on January 1 2004 have been further deferred. The deferred regulations are as follows:

the *Gun Show Regulations*

- the *Authorization to Export or Import Firearms Regulations (Businesses)*
- The *Import and Export of Firearms Regulations (Individuals)*, except for the import provisions that are already in place for non-residents, and
- sections 8 to 10 and 12 to 16 of the *Public Agents Firearms Regulations*, dealing with the reporting of firearms in public agencies' inventories (deferred from January 1, 2004 to January 1, 2005)

The *Gun Show Regulations* and the indicated sections of the *Public Agents Firearms Regulations* are now scheduled to come into effect on January 1, 2005. The regulations pertaining to the import and export of firearms will be brought into effect when the related sections in the *Firearms Act*, as amended by *Bill C-10A*, are brought into force. You will be notified when this occurs.

As announced in *Special Bulletin for Businesses—No. 37*, we are in the process of amending the *Firearms Act Regulations*. Some of the amendments to the regulations are to support *Firearms Act* amendments that received Royal Assent in May 2003. Other amendments are to streamline processes, to reduce the administrative burden for businesses and public agencies, and to improve the delivery of services. Amendments are also required to enable Canada to meet its obligations under interna-

tional conventions to deter the illegal movement and trafficking of firearms, firearm parts and ammunition across international borders.

Deferring the regulations allows more time to complete the regulatory changes and to give businesses, public agencies, and individuals more time to prepare to implement the amended regulations.

Once the amendments to the regulations have been made, you will be provided with updated information about what your business will need to do to be able to import or export or sponsor a gun show, as well as other changes that may affect your business.

Amnesty Extension for Prohibited 12 (6) Handguns

Handguns with a barrel length of 105 mm or less, and handguns that discharge .25 or .32 calibre ammunition, became prohibited on December 1, 1998. Since that date, there has been an amnesty for businesses and individuals that possessed a prohibited handgun lawfully on the date it became prohibited, but that were not eligible to keep it under the *Firearms Act* and the *Firearms Licenses Regulations*.

The amnesty was scheduled to expire on December 31, 2003, but it has been extended another two years, until December 31, 2005.

In May 2003, Royal Assent was given to a *Firearms Act* amendment that gives grandfathered status to prohibited handguns that were in a business's inventory and reported to the Commissioner of the RCMP on December 1, 1998, and to prohibited handguns that individuals acquired and registered between February 14, 1995, and December 1, 1998.

The proposed regulatory amendments that the Solicitor General tabled in June 2003 included a proposal to amend the *Firearms Licenses Regulations* to enable businesses to sell their inventories of prohibited firearms to a grandfathered and properly licensed individual.

Starting this fall, we began consulting with key stakeholders across Canada on the proposed regulatory amendments. Extending the amnesty allows affected businesses and individuals to retain possession of their prohibited handguns while the feedback acquired during the consultations is reviewed, the drafting of the regulations is completed, and the necessary approval to make the amendments has been obtained.

Although businesses cannot yet sell their prohibited handguns at retail to an individual business, the terms of the amnesty allow businesses

Continued on page 5...

to sell their prohibited handguns to a business that is licensed to possess them for an approved purpose as set out in the *Firearms Licenses Regulations*.

In the case of short-barrelled handguns, businesses also have the option of replacing the barrel with one longer than 105 mm and turning the short barrel in to a police or firearms officer for disposal. The handgun may be then sold as a restricted firearm.

This bulletin is intended to provide general information only. For legal references, please refer to the Firearms Act and its regulations. Provincial, territorial, and municipal laws, regulations, and policies may also apply.

MEET THE STAFF

Over the next few issues we will feature short biographies of the OMMC staff.

Don Yaworsky, the new **Executive Director**, retired as a major from the military (Air Element) as a Logistics Officer in 1994 after serving for thirty-four years. He was the DND Liaison Officer to the OMMC from 1993 to 1994 and also elected as a director in the OMMC. During this period he toured the former East Germany and helped retrieve various military small arms, vehicles, tanks, guns, aircraft, uniforms, and accoutrements for CF museums throughout Canada. His second career involved teaching at Ottawa's Algonquin College, and various material management consulting and instructing contracts with the federal government. His third and least successful endeavour was actively researching for a book he planned to write on "How to Play Golf in the Low 110s." He looks forward to meeting his old friends again and making new ones in the OMMC.

My name is **Martine Hunter** and I will be the new **Administrative Assistant** for the OMMC. I am presently employed with Statistics Canada doing conference arrangement and financial administration. I have volunteered for OMMC for the past 4 years. You may have seen me in Kingston, Quebec, Hamilton, or Halifax taking your meal tickets at the door, helping you find your group or giving you a water bottle... I am very pleased to be working with the OMMC this year. We will be meeting each other in Regina, Saskatchewan this year. I am presently working on membership renewal. You will be getting a renewal document in the near future.

Murphy's Laws of Combat Operations

39. If you take more than your fair share of objectives, you will get more than your fair share of objectives to take
40. When both sides are convinced they're about to lose, they're right.
41. Professional Soldiers are predictable; the world is full of dangerous amateurs.
42. Military Intelligence is a contradiction
43. Fortify your front, you'll get your rear shot up.
44. Weather AIN'T neutral
45. If you can't remember, the Claymore is pointed towards you.
46. Air defence motto: shoot 'em out on the ground.
47. Flies high, it dies; low and slow, it'll go.
48. The Cavalry doesn't always come to the rescue.
49. Napalm is an area support weapon.
50. Mines are equal opportunity weapons.
51. B-52's are the ultimate close support weapon.
52. Sniper's motto: reach out and touch someone.
53. The one item you need is always in short supply.
55. Interchangeable parts aren't.
56. It's not the one with your name on it; it's the one addressed "to whom it may concern" you've got to worry about.
57. When in doubt, empty your magazine.
58. The side with the simplest uniform wins.
59. Contact will occur on the ground between two adjoining maps.
60. If the Platoon Sergeant can see you, so can the enemy.
61. Never stand when you can sit, never sit when you can lie down, never stay awake when you can sleep.

To be continued in the next issue...



IDENTIFY THE ARTIFACT

In this new feature of The Bulletin, readers will submit pictures of artefacts held in their museums that they are having trouble identifying or finding more information on. Also if you have any research questions that you think our readers may be able to help you with, submit them to us and we'll include them in this column. If you are interested in contributing in a future issue contact Arlene Doucette at amdoucette@hotmail.com for further information. The success of this column is dependent on reader participation!

Marilyn Gurney is leading by example by being our first contributor. The boots seen below were brought back from Europe by a Canadian, possibly a POW. They have leather uppers, wooden soles, and are assembled with nails. When, where, and how he acquired them is not known. Any information that would help identify them is welcome.

The Maritime Command Museum is also conducting research on a soldier who served in the First World War. He was interned at a POW camp at Essen, Germany for two years and seven months. When he returned to Canada, the Canadian government gave him a new name. Has anyone heard of this practise before? And if so, why did they do this? If you can be of assistance in either of these matters, please contact Marilyn Gurney at the Maritime Command Museum. Her contact information can be found on page 2.



FEDS FAILING TO PROTECT CANADIAN HERITAGE: AG

from www.cbc.ca

OTTAWA - Canada's cultural heritage is at risk of being lost if the federal government doesn't take action now, says Auditor General Sheila Fraser. In her report, Fraser states the government is failing to protect Canadian heritage for future generations, and the report specifically points to the country's crumbling heritage buildings, neglected historic sites, and the rapid deterioration and lack of preservation of important historical documents.

"If funding is to be kept at this level and we still try to continue on the way we are, we are inevitably going to lose our heritage sites," Fraser said. More than two-thirds of the country's historic sites, like Ontario's Fort Henry and Quebec's Carillon Canal, and a number of federal heritage buildings administered by the Parks Heritage Agency are in poor to fair condition, according to the report.

Fraser also singled out the Alexander Graham Bell Museum in Baddeck, N.S., which needs major repairs.

Carol Whitfield, with Parks Canada in Cape Breton, says a new roof and air conditioning system will cost about \$1 million. But other historic sites on the island need attention too, she adds. "I probably need about \$10 million simply to

look after the basic cultural resources over the next five to 10 years. And, currently, if our budget doesn't change we won't have all of that money - probably about one-third to half of it," Whitfield said.

Fraser's report concludes that the federal agencies responsible for protecting heritage are underfunded and stretched to their limits, and blamed the government for scaling back cultural money while the scope of the Canadian Heritage department grew. The report quotes Statistics Canada data showing that the government's 2000-2001 cultural expenditures suffered a significant drop in the mid-1990s. The report also cites poor management and recordkeeping by government agencies like the National Archives.

The Heritage Canada Foundation, a national, non-governmental charity that promotes preserving the country's heritage buildings and sites, welcomed the auditor general's critical appraisal as "a thorough assessment of the deficiencies in federal heritage legislation, policies and programs."

"These are important and welcome first steps," said Brian Anthony, the foundation's executive director, "but more steps, bolder steps, are needed if the federal government is to play the leadership role in the heritage field that we expect of it."

**BUY IN
BULK?**

Executive Director has offered to coordinate a bulk buy for **conservation material** such as acid free paper, Tyvec, vapour sealed envelopes, negative envelopes, etc. if there is sufficient interest.

Also being considered is a search for a source of supply for **mannequins**, to perform a bulk buy for all interested museums. Interested parties should provide their need for mannequins (including description, size, and quantity) and the source of supply and prices for various quantities (e.g. 1-20, 10-20, 20-50).

Please e-mail Don Yaworsky at ommc@rogers.com to give us your opinion on this idea. Your input, whether for or against, is important to determine the feasibility of this endeavour.

We look forward to YOUR feedback!

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\$600 Double Sided Insert

Contact the newsletter editor for submission info at
amdoucette@hotmail.com

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

The Royal Montreal Regiment Museum

The main square in the small French town of Cagnicourt, France, was renamed in September 2003 to Place du Lieutenant George MacKean, eighty five years after his actions there liberated the town from the occupying Germans. MacKean, a scout in the Royal Montreal Regiment, entered Cagnicourt with only two privates. Hundreds of German soldiers watched them walking into the square, and with a unit of the Canadian Corps First Division still 250 meters away, MacKean waved his arms and barked orders to the unseen (and unseeing) troops. The Germans were fooled, dropped their rifles and started to run. The three Canadians managed to take more than 150 of them prisoner. This little known piece of Canada's First World War history was rediscovered by historian Michel Gravel, and after he contacted a photograph collector in Cagnicourt, local interest in the story took off and plans for a memorial in the town of 400 were soon underway. On 6 September 2003, about forty Canadians gathered with the people of Cagnicourt to dedicate a monument and re-name the square in MacKean's honour. The Royal Montreal Regiment was well represented at the ceremony, along with descendants of MacKean and Pte. Masumi Mitsui, one of the men accompanying him, and representatives from the Government of Canada and dignitaries from Britain, the United States, and France.

With files from the Edmonton Journal and Maclean's

**DOES YOUR MUSEUM HAVE NEWS TO SHARE
WITH OTHER MEMBERS? LET US KNOW AND
WE'LL INCLUDE IT HERE!**

RESEARCHERS JOIN FORCES TO PRESERVE MILITARY HERI- TAGE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

From UNB Alumni

(<http://unbalumni.collegepublisher.com/main.cfm/include/detail/storyid/577987.html>)

By Christy English

The province's history is coming to life thanks to the creators of the New Brunswick Military Heritage Project (NBMHP).

Devoted to fostering public interest in the often-forgotten military history of the province, the project was conceived in 2000 by the Military and Strategic Studies Program at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. History professor Marc Milner is co-director of NBMHP with Brent Wilson, a senior researcher with UNBF's Centre for Conflict Studies. After his book *Canada's Navy: The First Century* was published, Dr. Milner became inspired, he says, by a graduate student's thesis on Fort Beauséjour and a book by Ernest Clarke of Nova Scotia titled *The Siege of Fort Cumberland, 1776: An Episode in the American Revolution*.

"I became smitten by a history whose scope few are aware of," said Dr. Milner. "Add to that the fact that the Chatham air base had shut down, old forts in Saint John were being bulldozed and I had visited two abandoned armament depots at McGivney and Renous."

Dr. Milner came up with the idea of creating a series of booklets on various aspects of New Brunswick's military past. The rest, as they say, is history and the N.B. Military Heritage Project was born.

"In early 2003, we approached Goose Lane Editions here in Fredericton to get a quote on book design," Dr. Milner explained. "We had intended to publish the series ourselves but Goose Lane came back with an offer to co-publish the books. We have since signed a three-year contract to publish up to four books a year."

Written by historians and military personnel, the books explore subjects ranging from New Brunswick's pivotal role in the American Revolution to one veteran's account of caring for World War I transport horses. Handy information guides to important historic sites, the colourful books feature period drawings, paintings and photographs, as well as archival and contemporary maps. In fact, one of Canada's foremost cartographers

- Mike Bechthold - has been hired to work on the Project.

The first two books in the series were published this fall - *Saint John Fortifications, 1630-1956*, by Roger Sarty and Doug Knight, and *Hope Restored: The American Revolution and the Founding of New Brunswick* by Robert Dallison.

"Bob Dallison, a retired director of Kings Landing and a retired lieutenant-colonel in the Canadian Army, was a logical soul mate for the project," Dr. Milner said. "Without him, we couldn't have done this. He has written one of the books and is a valued member of the NBMHP editorial committee."

As the project's co-director and former curator of the York-Sunbury Historical Society Museum, Brent Wilson sees a lot of value in the project as a public education tool. "Marc and I will be thrilled if the books and other educational resources related to the project make their way into school classrooms and local libraries."

The NBMHP book series showcases an eclectic mix of subjects and people, Dr. Milner said. "New Brunswick history has taken interesting twists and turns, many of which were shaped by military concerns. We have a list of 30 possible titles."

Upcoming titles include *The Siege of Fort Beauséjour, 1755*, by Christopher Hand; *Pirates and Privateers of New Brunswick* by Faye Kert; *The Military Road: The Overland Route to Canada, 1763-1870*, by Gary Campbell; and *"Passchendaele Was Hell!" The War Memoir of James Robert Johnston, 1916-1918*, edited by Brent Wilson.

The NBMHP project is being funded by the UNB Military and Strategic Studies Program and a grant from the Canadian War Museum. The project Web site <http://www.unb.ca/nbmhp>, created by UNB graduate Ken Anderson, contains background information, a data base, supplementary information on the books published in the series, and hot links to other related sites. "The Military Heritage Project is a labour of love - a real passion," said Dr. Milner. "Eventually it will be a fully bilingual project, providing a common narrative for both the English and French in the province."

Ideal for high school classrooms, tourists and casual reading at home, each book sells for \$14.95.

CANADIAN ARTS & HERITAGE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

CAPACITY BUILDING COMPONENT FOR HERITAGE ORGANIZATIONS

NEXT DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 2004

The Canadian Arts & Heritage Sustainability Program aims to strengthen organizational effectiveness and build the capacity of arts and heritage organizations. The Capacity Building Component for Heritage Organizations provides contributions to professional not-for-profit heritage organizations that do not benefit from participation in a Stabilization Project. This component supports professional not-for-profit heritage organizations as well as national and provincial professional not-for-profit heritage service organizations, including Aboriginal and culturally-diverse heritage organizations, and those that operate in a context of an official language minority, or a rural, remote, or economically-challenged community. It contributes up to 50% of eligible costs for projects intended to improve how organizations plan, organize, finance and govern themselves. Typical projects are short term (up to one year) and serve to transform the way an organization conducts its business, or help to raise an organization's activities to a higher level. They may include, but are not restricted to, producing or reviewing strategic or business plans, developing revenue-generation strategies, improving management tools and conducting feasibility and/or market studies. The next application submission deadline is APRIL 15, 2004. To be eligible, project activities must take place within the period between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2005. To learn more about this program, obtain an application form, and locate the Canadian Heritage regional office in your area to discuss your project, please access our website at: www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pcapc-cahsp/02_e.cfm. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their nearest regional office of the Department of Canadian Heritage before submitting a completed application. For National heritage service organizations please call the national office of Canadian Heritage at (819) 997-7979.

PROGRAMME DE CONSOLIDATION DES ARTS ET DU PATRIMOINE CANADIENS

VOLET DÉVELOPPEMENT DES COMPÉTENCES POUR LES ORGANISMES PATRIMONIAUX

**PROCHAINE DATE D'ÉCHÉANCE : LE
15 AVRIL 2004**

Le Programme de consolidation des arts et du patrimoine canadiens vise à renforcer l'efficacité organisationnelle et à développer les compétences des organismes artistiques et patrimoniaux. Le Volet Développement des compétences offre des contributions aux organismes patrimoniaux qui ne participent pas à un projet de stabilisation. Ce volet appuie les organismes patrimoniaux professionnels à but non lucratif, ainsi que les organismes nationaux et provinciaux de services à but non lucratif, y compris les organismes autochtones et ceux des communautés culturelles, ceux oeuvrant au sein de communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire, dans des milieux ruraux, éloignés ou aux prises avec des difficultés économiques. Il contribue jusqu'à 50% des coûts admissibles de projets visant à améliorer la planification, la gestion et le financement des organismes. Les projets-types soutenus par ce volet sont de courte durée (un an ou moins) et servent à transformer le fonctionnement d'un organisme ou à rehausser son niveau d'activité. Ils peuvent englober, sans s'y limiter, l'établissement ou la révision de plans stratégiques ou de plans d'affaires, l'élaboration de stratégies de production de revenus, l'amélioration des outils de gestion et la réalisation d'études de faisabilité ou de marché. La prochaine date limite pour le dépôt d'une demande est le 15 octobre 2004. Afin d'être admissibles, les activités du projet devront être effectuées entre le 1 avril 2004 et le 31 mars 2005. Pour plus de détails, obtenir un formulaire et les coordonnées de nos bureaux régionaux, consultez notre site <http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pcapc-cahsp/pdf3f.pdf>. Il est conseillé de contacter un agent de programme d'un bureau régional avant de déposer une demande. Les organismes nationaux peuvent contacter le Ministère au (819) 997-7979.

SAFETY MATTERS

PUTTING HEALTH HAZARDS IN MUSEUMS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

by Dr. Brian Hoyle, published in *Muse*, Jan/Feb 2004

Museums are a tangible link to the world that was. The stories they tell through art and objects— fossilized, crafted from various fabrics, written on paper or other materials, or present in some other form— enrich our lives and broaden our understanding of what has come before.

The items on display are the end result of careful restoration, preservation, and maintenance. However, this care sometimes carries risks. Modern chemical restoratives and preservatives can be irritating and even toxic. Dealing with a relic from the past can mean inheriting an archive of chemicals or organisms. Pigments used by the great master painters, while dazzling in their brilliance, in some cases owed their rich hues to poisonous compounds.

In most museums or conservation laboratories, restoration of artworks or artefacts can involve the use of strong acids, solvents, and toxic, metal-based pigments. The dating of archaeological or natural specimens can require the use of X-rays or radioisotopes, and many fossils and mineralogical samples can give off radioactive emissions. Finally, clothing, textiles, paper, plant and animal materials may harbour tiny but nasty live hitchhikers.

Pests, Poisons, and Other Problems

Shelves full of potential chemical or microbial threats, the possibility of taking something unexpected home with you after a museum visit— all this can sound a little scary.

"This is a huge subject, with hundreds of toxic preservation chemicals and different methods of application," says Monona Rossol, an industrial hygienist with Arts, Crafts & Theater Safety, Inc. (ACTS), a New York based company that provides health hazard advice and publications to museums, theatre companies and other arts organizations. As with any complex problem, breaking the issue into manageable chunks can help museums formulate a plan of action. For example, the list of toxic chemicals that could pose a problem for staff in an art museum is not as long as the list of chemicals used in preservatives, antimicrobials, material preparation, and other purposes in other types of museums.

Racks of dusty artefacts, stored away from everyday hustle and bustle, can become a haven for pests. One way to deal with insects is through the use of pesticides— chemicals that typically are lethal to the offending

beastie. But not so long ago, bugs weren't the only ones being poisoned: arsenic and mercury were used to be common pest control agents, and can still pose a threat decades after their application.

Determining if an artefact has been treated with a pesticide can be challenging. Samples can be tested for the presence of arsenic or mercury. Unfortunately, false negative test results are not uncommon. Even if a sample is free of arsenic, it can be hiding any one of literally hundreds of other hazardous materials. There is a witch's brew of industrial pesticide compounds. Chlorinated hydrocarbons like DDT, benzene hexachlorides, cyclodienes, halogens and halogenated compounds, phenol and substituted phenols, organic phosphorus derivatives— the list is staggeringly long.

Pesticides pose two concerns. Their application can be hazardous if done sloppily or under inappropriate conditions (i.e., a non-ventilated room with no protective equipment). As well, handling artefacts carries the risk of encountering lingering chemicals. The infamous and now banned compound DDT was a popular wood pesticide in past decades, and artefacts may still carry residue.

Exposure to these pesticides can result in some serious health problems. Acute symptoms include stomachache, diarrhea, headache, rash, and, in rare cases, neurological malfunction and even death. More insidious are the chronic effects of exposure to some agents. An example is the tendency of some pesticides such as DDT to accumulate in body tissues. There may be no symptoms of exposure for a long time. But eventually, the undetected accumulation of the toxic materials can threaten health and even life. Any exposure can pose a potentially devastating risk to pregnant women.

"A trained eye can sometimes detect clues, such as white crystals on wool or black stains on herbarium sheet, that indicate the presence of pesticides, but this is certainly not always the case," says Fiona Graham, a conservator with the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa.

Knowing the age and origins of an object and something of its preservation history is no doubt ideal for identifying and mitigating risk, but past treatments might not have been documented, or the paperwork may have long since been lost. Whatever the case, a diligent conservator should make sure that any safety concerns are known and understood by other workers, such as maintenance and cleaning staff or interns.

Minimizing the handling of artefacts can prevent the majority of acute and chronic symptoms. "Ironically, some of the precautions that are used to protect the collections from people—wearing gloves and minimizing handling—provide good protection for the museum workers from the objects," says Graham. "I would esti-

mate that the majority of museum staff that are wearing white gloves are doing so out of concern for the collections rather than to protect themselves, but the result is the same."

The attitude towards pesticide contamination of museum artefacts has definitely changed in the past 20 years, says Graham. "Labour codes and lawsuits are powerful persuaders, she notes.

Mold: A Dirty Little Secret?

To many museums, mold is the problem that dares not speak its name. Indeed, finding museum spokespeople to go on record about mold problems, is, to say the least, challenging.

"There is quite a bit of a [mold] problem [in museums], and yes, they are reluctant to talk," says Monona Rossol. "They want the public to see them as a safe repository for their art and historical materials."

Sherry Guild is an exception to that code of silence. Guild is a paper conservator in the Treatment and Development Division at the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, and the co-author of a soon-to-be-released technical bulletin entitled *Mold Prevention and Collection Recovery: Guidelines for Heritage Collections*.

"People responsible for heritage collections remain concerned about mold contamination following a flood or major water intrusion and when setting and maintaining the correct level of humidity," Guild explains. "This is good, but not new. What *is* new is that people are becoming increasingly aware that mold is a serious health concern and precautions need to be taken to avoid exposure to it. I was never cavalier but now I am vigilant."

Mold thrives on surfaces like film, photographic negatives, and paper. The fuzzy growth can damage the artefact and, if environmental conditions are suitable, spread to neighbouring surfaces. The dormant or hibernating form of many mold species produces spores: hardy structures designed to protect mold's genetic material in less welcoming environments until conditions become more hospitable. The dust-like specs can become easily airborne. Inhaled deep into the lungs, they can cause everything from a mild allergic reaction to chronic asthma to serious, life-threatening infections. As if spores weren't heinous enough, molds also produce a number of volatile (and smelly) organic compounds that can cause headaches, irritation of the mucous membranes and other unpleasant symptoms.

Consultation with a mold specialist—a mycologist—is always prudent when mold is discovered. "It may not be necessary, however, to determine what type of mold you may have," notes the Website of the U.S. Centres and

Prevention for Disease Control. "All molds should be treated the same with respect to potential health risks and removal."

When battling mold, museum staff should not be blasé in their precautions. Using chemicals to kill mold is no longer a recommended strategy, according to Guild. "Although chemical methods have been used, their efficacy, possible deleterious effects on the artefacts and considerations about the effects of these substances on humans have not, in some cases, been fully investigated," she says. Also, since mold spores need not be alive to be troublesome, killing mold may not really solve anything.

"The emphasis [today] is on aseptic techniques to remove the visible mold growth without dispersing the spores to non-contaminated artefacts or the rest of the building," says Guild. Professional cleaning help involving aspiration or vacuuming can be a wise course of action, as spores may become airborne during the clean up. Businesses providing this service can be found in almost any telephone directory.

However, better than dealing with a mold infestation is preventing the growth in the first place. Regular inspection of artefacts, especially those kept in the least accessible areas of the building, is a must. Non-conservatorial staff and even volunteers can be trained to recognize the telltale signs of mold growth. As well, a regular regiment of washing shelves, walls, and other surfaces with a diluted bleach solution will keep mold growth in check.

In a perfect world, preservation of artefacts and eradication of pests would be efficient and would pose no health threat. There has been some movement towards this goal. For example, the latest fumigation processes replace oxygen with an inert gas. Freezing is also used in some instances to eliminate insects.

But, as Monona Rossol notes, the reality remains that "if you want to kill stuff, sometimes there must be a toxic substance involved."

Development of pesticide and preservative alternatives for museums is not a big priority for chemical companies. "Museums are not a big market for pesticides, so no major research by the U.S. pesticide industry is being directed to this issue," says Rossol. Instead, agricultural chemicals are being adapted for museum use. Even if improved chemicals are developed, they will need to jump through the regulatory hoops of the American and Canadian approval machinery before being licensed for use.

So, for the foreseeable future, diligence, vigilance and common sense will be the watchword for health safety in museums.

TAX RULES AFFECTING DONATIONS

Advocacy Alert from the Canadian Museums Association

In November 2003, the Department of Finance announced proposed changes to the Income Tax Act. These changes would limit the tax benefits from "buy-low, donate-high" charitable donations made under tax shelter and other arrangements.

As a consequence, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) advises that as of December 5, 2003, the value of a tax receipt issued by a charity for gifts of art will be limited to the donor's cost of the property, where the property is donated within three years of acquisition. Please note this does not apply to certified cultural properties.

This measure is aimed at tax shelter and similar arrangements through which items such as works of art are sold in bulk through a promoter. The promoter then donates them to a registered charity which issues a tax receipt for a considerably higher amount than was paid for the donated items. For the donor, this scheme results in a greater income tax credit than the price paid. It may be disallowed by CCRA at a later date.

For guidance on handling such cases, please refer to the Fact Sheet at www.ccr-a-adrc.gc.ca/newsroom/factsheets/2003/nov/1125taxshelter-e.html

The following information may assist those who have inquired recently about tax rules governing membership fees. A charitable institution can issue an official donation receipt for the "eligible amount" of the payment of membership dues.

The eligible amount is determined in two steps. First, the institution must determine the value of the advantage gained through a membership donation. For example, membership may entail free or discounted admission or a purchase discount at the gift shop. A tax receipt may only be issued if the advantage gained is 80% or less than the membership fee.

Next, to determine the eligible amount, the institution must again consider the advantage received by the member in return for the fee. Where the advantage does not exceed 10% or \$75, a receipt for the full amount may be issued. However, where the advantage exceeds 10% or \$75, the institution must deduct the amount of the advantage from the amount of the payment.

For example, for a contribution of \$100, a member

receives a tote bag valued at \$15. Since the advantage exceeds 10% (i.e., 10% of \$100 = \$10), the institution can issue an official donation receipt for \$85 (i.e., eligible amount = \$100 - \$15).

Specific questions regarding these matters should be directed to your local CCRA office.

BOOK REVIEW

from www.amazon.ca

Who Killed the Canadian Military?

by J.L. Granatstein

When it was first published in 1988, J.L. Granatstein's *Who Killed Canadian History?* set off a firestorm of controversy, touching a chord in our nation's psyche. *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* promises to follow the same trajectory, as Canadians question the effectiveness of a military that is weakly waving the white flag both at home and on the international peacekeeping front. From failed submarine deals to tragic helicopter crashes, military equipment is sadly out of date and out of shape, Granatstein asserts. Military personnel are stretched far too thinly and are ill-prepared for the battle field—or peacekeeping. He wonders if Canadians are aware that we rank 34th among nations in the provision of troops for UN peacekeeping, and that our vaunted reputation for diplomacy is pretty much in tatters. And now, it's not just Canadians who are questioning our diminished military. Since 9/11 and the US-Iraq war, America is seriously evaluating our ability to defend our own border against terrorist attacks.

Granatstein fingers a government who believes that peacekeeping solves everything, and the organizational restructurers who thought that putting everyone in green might make a new breed of soldier. Most important, Granatstein provides a powerful and articulate argument for the re-establishment of a well-funded and well-trained military—and a realistic strategy for how to achieve it, given the threatening new climate of the 21st century. *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* will provoke impassioned debate and controversy in the media, and among ordinary Canadians.
