

## CAO Annual Report 2004 - 2005

### President's Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the CAO, I would like to thank our funding partners: the City of Ottawa and the Ontario Arts Council for their continued operational support. The Council has worked very hard to increase funds raised through events and memberships, but this work would not be possible without the support of our core funding partners. I would also like to thank the Ontario Ministry of Culture for their project support during the past year.

The Council is pleased to participate in the City's pilot project for arts service agreements. After a year of regrouping and assessing the Council's priorities, we look ahead with cautious optimism as the City addresses issues of under funding and the increasing expectations of the community.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank *Gowling Lefleur Henderson LLP* for showing their confidence in the Council and the *Victor Tolgesy Arts Award* by increasing their financial commitment to the Award from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

The Council looks forward to working with other organizations in the community as sponsorship opportunities arise during the year.

Thanks are also extended to the very dedicated volunteers, including the Board of Directors. A very special debt of gratitude is extended to Peter Honeywell and Zoë Ashby who continued to dedicate their energies to the arts community and the CAO during a very difficult year, which would have demoralized and paralyzed a lesser team.

The Board of Directors has met eight (8) times since the last Annual Meeting. The Board carried out its duties being mindful of its responsibilities for funders' and members' monies. The Board was committed to fiscal responsibility. Both Board and staff were very conservative about spending and have economized wherever possible. As a result, it is anticipated that the Executive Director will return to being paid for his work on a full time basis and that the Administrative Assistant will work more hours. Board Committees were active throughout the year and their reports are included in the Annual Report.

One of the priorities of the CAO has been to support additional arts venues in the City of Ottawa. And, indeed, how exciting to see the progress occurring on a number of fronts, including a new venue for GCTC and a potential new concert hall.

I would like to thank the Board, the membership, and staff for giving me the opportunity to serve the Council as President for the past three years.

Marie Keasey, President

## ***Executive Director's Report***

After two years of concentrated program development related to arts marketing and promotion, the CAO experienced a loss of project funding and a period of readjustment following the city's cancellation of the ***Join the Crowd!*** campaign. Following the intense community reaction to the City of Ottawa 2004 arts budget, it was unfortunate that the community momentum for public arts support did not translate into stabilization of established programs.

Our organization is very fortunate to have had the dedication of a Board of Directors whose advice and involvement has guided our programs and services during the past year. The office administration team also contributed volunteer efforts, as we augmented our limited staff hours. Zoë Ashby has provided our membership with a variety of services, which are delivered with her unique style and sense of humour. We were delighted to welcome Sara Tiffin, a student intern from the University of Ottawa, who following the completion of her term, decided to continue as a volunteer on a regular basis. A number of other volunteers have stayed connected and have taken part in numerous projects. Their contribution has made a huge difference and many of our successes are due to the generosity of these members.

In addition to our established committees' activities, the CAO is participating as a partner on a provincial steering committee for a new project titled the *Creative Clusters Development Program*. Initiated by Toronto's Artscape, the first phase of this project includes a series of workshops to assist Ontario communities build capacity to develop and maintain multi-tenant centres that serve the arts and cultural communities. The CAO will also be participating in Artscape's second conference, Creative Places + Spaces2: Risk Revolution. The valuable experience gained from these professional development sessions will be of particular importance as we work with local groups who embark on meeting their cultural facility needs.

As we move into our new programming year, two Board Members will be retiring. Lisa Pai has been contributing for the past four years and her involvement with our fundraising events has been greatly appreciated. Christian Perry's contribution has been nothing short of remarkable. He has set up financial systems and processes and completed numerous tasks that went beyond the call of duty. In anticipation of his leaving, he has trained our incoming Treasurer and leaves a solid financial footing for the future.

A final word of thanks goes to Marie Keasey, who for the past three years has given of her time and talents as CAO President. We've gained much from her patience, knowledge and leadership. We are delighted that Marie will continue to work with us as Past-President in the year ahead.

## **Advocacy**

The CAO's advocacy actions in the past year have included independent and collaborative efforts. A community working group representing the interests of numerous social services programs was formed in early 2004 to present a cohesive response to the City of Ottawa Budget. That group has continued to meet and shares information of common concern. It has been beneficial to have the support of a variety of sectors as we meet with senior staff of the City of Ottawa and co-ordinate actions. The CAO also participated with a group of arts colleagues representing a number of arts umbrella groups in preparation for responses to City Council and the media.

The 2005 City of Ottawa budget saw encouraging news on the facilities front, with contributions earmarked for the new GCTC theatre project, the Concert Hall and the Orleans Cultural Centre. Funding in the amount of \$750,000 identified in the draft budget to retain the theatre at 910 Gladstone Avenue, did not receive the support of City Council. A new strategy and advocacy effort needs to be established in the year ahead to secure this established performing arts venue.

Operational funding continues to lag behind the targets established in the 20/20 Arts Plan. Funds for visual arts acquisitions and the cultural capital grants programs were not even included in the budget draft document. The CAO recently participated in a focus group that reviewed the City of Ottawa's Arts Investment Strategy research and report. This report makes a compelling case for arts investment at the local level that will come forward to City Council this fall. The CAO will continue to report to the membership and will work towards an improved environment for the arts in Ottawa.

Peter Honeywell, Chair  
Advocacy Committee

## **Membership/Fundraising Events**

### **Membership**

CAO membership continues to grow, proving the importance of the quality service that the CAO provides. There is a strong level of satisfaction among our members who have expressed their appreciation for the value their membership provides. The CAO maintains its monthly communiqué with members with its popular *e-news*. Many members have expressed their delight at receiving this informative synopsis of members' news and opportunities. The bi-monthly Mailout is also highly valued, particularly for its colourful content of brochures, flyers and notices. Both the *e-news* and the Mailout represent the opportunity for members to both give and receive information that is of interest to the membership as a whole.

Another consistently popular membership benefit is the use of the CAO Micaela Fitch Boardroom. Group members are entitled to use this facility three times per year with a reduction in rates for the remainder of the year. This facility has also proven popular with many government and non-governmental organizations, who have used it in the past year for workshops, meetings and consultation sessions. The CAO has plans in the coming year to improve our technical services to better meet our members' needs.

The CAO's advisory services continue to be of immense value to members, either with those who set up appointments and those with urgent needs who use this service on a drop-in basis. In addition, queries by e-mail or phone are met with prompt and informed replies.

Support for the work of the CAO was heard loud and clear at the Head's Up! meeting of members in September 2004. This occasion to share information and ideas acknowledged the CAO's continued commitment to its members of providing the relevant services that they require. The CAO offers genuine representation when members need their interests heard, whether at City Hall, with the business community, patrons or with the media.

### **Fundraising Events**

Our two major fundraising events, the Holiday Silent Auction and the Sweetheart Lunch for the Arts continue to be both popular and successful. Both events surpassed budget expectations. Our CAO newsletters have been a wonderful opportunity to report on these events and publicly thank all the individuals and organizations that have contributed to the success of these fundraisers.

The Holiday Silent Auction, now in its fourth year was held on one day as opposed to the two of previous years. The one-day format proved to be just as successful

and gave a buzz to the event that was felt during the entire day. Many thanks go to the 70 artists, arts organizations, businesses and individuals who contributed to the creation of a fundraiser with so much warmth, that everyone leaves glowing!

This year's Sweetheart Lunch for the Arts proved, once again, to be a successful fundraiser for the CAO. We had a sellout event with a waiting list for seats. The luncheon continues to be an opportunity to heighten awareness of the CAO while giving us the opportunity to celebrate significant contributions to the Ottawa's artistic community – this year honouring Susan Annis as the Tolgesy winner and the Greenberg family for their contribution to GCTC's new theatre.

The announcement of Gowlings' increase of their financial contribution to the Tolgesy Award winner from \$1,000 to \$5,000 was very well received and proved their ongoing commitment to the arts in this city.

The CAO showcased the music of Dionysus (members of the Ottawa Youth Orchestra) and the art of four senior students from the Ottawa School of Art.

Many donors and sponsors of the event ensured that we had a significant increase in the funds raised at this year's luncheon. Thyme and Again's ongoing sponsorship has been a treat for both the CAO and guests. Many thank yous to the Museum of Nature for their sponsorship of the venue over the past number of years. Their support has been a key factor in our ability to build this event. Extensive renovations to the museum mean a change of venue for this event in the coming years so we will have a new look for this fundraiser in 2006.

The volunteers for the event, both in advance and on the day, were excellent! We thank all the Directors and volunteers who helped us, in addition special mention goes to Sara Tiffin, Rupert Allen, Sam Awwad, Suki Lee, Joanne Guillemette and Jennifer Gibbs. Sara, Rupert, Sam, Joanne and Suki have all been interns or on contract with the CAO in the last 2-3 years and their dedication to this organization was evident in the professional manner with which they conducted themselves while assisting us with this important event.

Geraldine Taylor, Chair  
Membership and Fundraising Committee

## Outreach

The CAO's Outreach Committee is primarily responsible for activities related to communications, awards and workshops. We are pleased to report that our communications, either through our E-News or our Circular, met all scheduled monthly deadlines. A special thanks is due to Zoë Ashby and Sara Tiffin for responding to the members' submissions, compiling the final copy and distributing to our membership.

The CAO web-site has been redesigned thanks to the work of Shebah Tatz. Final touches and extensive translation are underway and the new on-line information will be launched shortly. As part of the Committee's communications audit, it is recommended that new resources be found to ensure regular web-site updates, and on-going improvements to the site.

Another project that is nearing completion is a bilingual *Handbook for Business and the Arts*. This project will encourage the Ottawa business sector to invest in our local arts community. A companion guide for arts organizations, is also planned to be finalized this summer.

Our annual awards programs provide recognition of arts contributions and support artists projects. Susan Annis received the Victor Tolgesy Arts Award for her outstanding contribution to the arts in Ottawa, at the CAO Sweetheart Lunch for the Arts in February. A sincere thanks is due to *Gowling Lefleur Henderson LLP* for their sponsorship increase of the cash prize to \$5,000. Susan generously donated her cash prize to a number of local organizations that she has worked with over the past 20 years. The Sweetheart Lunch was also an occasion to celebrate the Greenberg Family Donation of \$2.5 million towards the new home of the Great Canadian Theatre Company. Dan Greenberg was on hand to accept a special recognition for this significant gift. This exciting new arts facility will be known as The Irving Greenberg Theatre Centre.

This year's recipients of the Corel Arts Endowment Awards include Evelyn Stroobach, who will receive funding to record an original contemporary composition, and Fateema Sayani for an alternative Ottawa arts guide, which will include numerous contributions by local artists. Congratulations to both of you!

The Micaela Fitch Room located in our office area at Arts Court, has never been busier! Over 70 workshops, information sessions, auditions, receptions and meetings have taken place throughout the year attracting well over 1,500 participants to our space. In addition to our own sessions, we continue to partner with other arts organizations to present professional development opportunities. We welcome your ideas and participation for future topics of interest.

Jean Fortier, Chair  
Outreach Committee