

## **President's 2006 General Membership Address**

Good Evening ladies and gentlemen and arts colleagues....

I am very pleased on behalf of the Sudbury Arts Council Conseil des Art du Sudbury to welcome you to our Annual General Meeting at our new location here on Durham St.

Since its original founding in 1974 as the Sudbury Arts Festivals Association, the Sudbury Arts Council has been evolving to meet the needs the arts community. In 1988 the Sudbury Arts Festival Association was renamed the Sudbury Arts Council with an amendment made to the original Letters Patent. The Sudbury Arts Council in 2000 applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and was approved for funding for the Community Arts Multit-Purpose Space also known as CAMPS. CAMPS would provide an opportunity for visual artists, musicians, theatre groups, and literary groups etc to have an affordable venue to showcase their talents.

Since becoming President of the Sudbury Arts Council in June of 2005, the Sudbury Arts Council has once again evolved to meet the current needs of the arts community. In partnership with the City

of Greater Sudbury, artists, and bilingual arts organizations both volunteer and professional, SAC has taken a leadership role in arts promotions, lobbying, advocacy and municipal cultural planning. The result of our efforts was the launch of the Artscape newsletter published monthly in the Sudbury Star as well as the redesign of our website to compliment this monthly publication. I'd like to thank Louis Delongchamp, Will Morin, and Mary Katherine Keown for their leadership in these endeavors.

For many years, artists and arts organizations have been lobbying local politicians and bureaucrats to recognize the arts as a business and not just as a hobby for some. In the spring of 2005, the City of Greater Sudbury took the initiative to organize the first of many forums on municipal cultural planning by hosting former Winnipeg Mayor Glenn Murray for a full day session which was well attended by our colleagues in the arts as well as members of city council and staff. In this session Murray made reference to the growth in Winnipeg as being directly related to the arts and improving in the quality of life for all citizens. The arts are an economic driver. When asked "why did you locate to Winnipeg, business replied by saying it was your quality of life; there are things here for our employees to do outside of work. Although all agreed that the arts was an economic driver and should be

supported it was the first to get cut at budget time due to what Glenn Murray referred to as the 3 P strategy of “Police, Pipes, and Pavement”

Later that fall the City of Greater Sudbury hired Gordon McIntosh to facilitate a series of sessions dedicated to shaping engine #2 of the city’s strategic plan “A City for the Creative, Curious and Adventuresome.” These sessions were designed to engage the arts community and to channel our thoughts and ideas as a collective. After a year of hard work and numerous visioning sessions an Arts and Culture Charter was drafted and adopted by City Council in October 2006. This was ground breaking. For the first time in the City of Greater Sudbury we now have an arts policy that defines short-term and long-term goals based on the feedback from the arts community. Throughout the last year great strides have been made in the arts on a municipal government level. Arts has moved from Leisure Services into Growth and Development, Stephanie Harris who is a business development officer with Growth and Development is dedicated full time working on the arts, the civic arts grants have been increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000 with grants available now for general operating and special projects. The deadline for 2007 grant applications is Wednesday, February 28. I’d like to offer a heartfelt thank you to former Mayor David

Courtemanche and his council for their leadership in the arts during the last term of council.

This next term of council will indeed be a very exciting and promising time for the arts community in Greater Sudbury as well. During the election campaign SAC hosted a debate at Sudbury Secondary School with all mayoral candidates. All candidates participated in a debate moderated by Paul Lowenburgh as well were also treated to a sneak peek to the Sound of Music. There was some music to our ears as mayoral candidates debated the need for a mixed use performing arts centre that has been promised in this term of council. Now, Mayor John Rodriguez spoke in favor of building such a facility with private public partnership investments and referred to the Arts and Culture Charter as a road map and how he likes direction with short-term and long-term goals. On the evening of the election I visited the headquarters for Dave Courtemanche and Lynne Reynolds and thanked them for being advocates for local arts and later visited with Mayor-Elect John Rodriguez. I congratulated him and told him “there is a role for the arts council to play in the arts community” and he replied with “you will be on my consultation team.”

On the night of the Inaugural Meeting of Council, Mayor Rodriguez promised a committee would be developed to look at the creation of the performing arts centre, what will it look like, what investments would be required, where would it be located, who would it serve, what partnerships could be developed. On day 99 we made a call to the Mayor's office and on day 51 we got a meeting with Mayor. John Lindsay, Oryst Sawchuk and I met with the Mayor to develop our partnership and to share information. Council has been asked to submit names for the committee which will be chaired by a prominent local citizen that can get results. The committee will be named at the February 28 meeting council. The Mayor is a visionary and recognizes the importance the arts have on a community when it comes to developing a healthy community with a great quality of life.

This next term of the Sudbury Arts Council will be one of growth and optimism as once again the role of SAC is changing. SAC is taking on a greater lobbying, advocacy and administrative role in the arts community as a facilitating and administrative body. It has been identified through the arts forums organized by the City of Greater Sudbury and the Arts and Culture Charter Steering Committee that we as an arts community, we don't connect, don't communicate, and don't celebrate collectively. There is great

discussion on all levels for the need for an umbrella arts organization. That organization is the Sudbury Arts Council and we are taking steps to embrace this change by developing a new mandate to Connect, Communicate and Celebrate. I will speak about his mandate later this evening.

Michelle Fex has taken a leave from the board of directors to fill in an interim director so we have a dedicated staff person in the office. SAC has selected Paul Gomrato from P&G Advertising to redesign our website with an anticipated launch within the next 8 weeks. The new website will reflect a clean and corporate image of SAC with an artistic feel. The website will act as a resource and communications tool for the arts community with enhanced member listings, simplified arts calendar, a media room, artist's profiles, links to other arts organizations, as well as information on granting programs and employment opportunities in the arts. Also within the next 8 weeks SAC will be making an application to FedNor to fund a strategic plan for the arts council that will engage the arts community and our partners in a sustainability plan that will help shape SAC as the umbrella arts organization in Greater Sudbury.

SAC is on the move. A new city council and a new direction for the arts community and we are prepared to embrace this change. Over the next year SAC will continue to develop and implement the ideas that will be brought forth in our strategic plan and the arts charter. We will continue to publish the monthly Artscape newsletter and weekly arts column in the Sudbury Star and will enter into new partnerships with the arts community, City of Greater Sudbury, Metro Centre and all levels of government to look a ways we can best Connect Community and Celebrate the arts in Greater Sudbury.

Tonight, I want to thank you for attending our AGM and wish to thank those who are letting their name stand for board of directors positions that will elected this evening. I'd like to thank the current board members for their support which include Vicki Gilhula who has returned to the board and is able to offer some historical perspective, John Lindsay who is well connected with city hall and is a past President of the Sudbury Symphony, Oryst Sawchuk, Jim Cook, and Bill Bradley who help keep us focused, Will Palmer, and Ron Nadjiwon for the Walden Art Club, Celeste Scopelites for the Art Gallery of Sudbury, Mike Large for Music and Film in Motion, and Jaime Ruddy for Artists on Elgin. We'd also like to recognize and thank Ed Tate who has been with us

since almost day one and Marie Shaw who are both on sick leave. To our new board members who will be elected this evening, you are in good company and we welcome you to join us on this adventure.

I'd like to also thank our funding partners the City of Greater Sudbury who provide us with annual operational funding, FedNor for the local initiative partnership which allowed us to hire a webmaster, and the Trillium Foundation who provided us with our final installment of the CAMPS funding in 2005.

A strong arts council is a sign of strong arts community. I'd personally like to invite each and every one of you in the room this evening as individuals or through your arts organizations to be our ambassadors by embracing the work of SAC by taking ownership of its programs and to work proactively with SAC to develop a stronger quality of life that we want and deserve in Greater Sudbury.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, and miigwitch