



The Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts Conseil des Arts de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

February 4, 2011

Dear member:

Greetings from the PEI Council of the Arts! I hope that 2011 has begun well and that you are looking forward to another creative year.

I am writing to let you know that, if you did not renew your membership just prior to or at our Annual General Meeting, your membership has expired. I want to encourage you to continue being part of the PEI Council of the Art by renewing today. 2011 promises to be an important year for the Council and its members.

Renewing is easy. Simply complete the attached membership form and return it, with the appropriate payment, to the address listed. Remember, by continuing to be a member of the PEICA, you add your voice to the collective voices of the membership, which helps lend importance and credibility to the messages the Council carries forward on your behalf to City Councils, the Provincial Legislature as well as national meetings with Federal arts funders.

In addition, PEICA members are eligible to receive nominations to be on the Board of Directors, which makes decisions on all policy and strategic direction, and to vote on issues at our General Meetings. One such vote is coming up in which you may well want to participate. At the recent PEI Council of the Arts' Annual General Meeting, I called a Special General Meeting for the membership to discuss the future ownership of The Guild.

The PEI Council of the Arts was originally gifted the old Royal Bank Building, now known as The Guild, in February of 1994. After extensive renovations that year, the facility became a home for the Arts in Charlottetown and housed a performance hall, gallery, studio, art class space, and the Printmakers' workshop, as well as the offices of various art groups and non-profit organizations. Subsequent years saw debts and necessary building maintenance issues increase, causing considerable financial and human resource strain on the Arts Guild Inc. and, in turn, the Council. In April 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was struck between the PEI Council of the Arts, the Province of PEI and the City of Charlottetown to create a new non-profit entity whose sole aim was the successful running of The Guild. All three organizations put forward substantial resources to make it work. Shortly thereafter, an organization, Ars Longa Inc., came into existence to operate and manage the building according to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding. The Ars Longa Board and its staff have been operating the building ever since, and they are largely recognized now as "The Guild".

In recent years, however, it has become more difficult for the Ars Longa team to meet the terms of the Memorandum properly. The issues of ownership without management (on the Council's part) and management without ownership (on Ars Longa's part) have created numerous situations, which all conspire to negatively impact the long term future of the facility. In several instances, Ars Longa has been unable to apply for, or turned down for, necessary funds because it is not the owner of the

building. Conversely, the Council is not able to access the funding because it is a provincial Arts Council. Situations such as these, and others, have become more and more common; therefore, I called for a meeting of the membership to vote on transferring ownership of The Guild from the PEI Council of the Arts to Ars Longa Inc., which, in the opinion of the Council's Board of Directors, would remedy most of the funding and support problems. Effectively, it would ensure the long-term stability of this important building.

The Council is seeking input on this matter from its members, the arts community, arts supporters and the public at large. All are encouraged to share their views by writing to me at chair@peica.ca. **An informational forum will be held on Tuesday, February 22nd, at 6:30 pm at the Guild.** If you are interested in ensuring the future of The Guild as an Arts space in Charlottetown, I encourage you to attend, listen to the presentations, and discuss the matter. Rest assured that this session will be run in an open and respectful manner, allowing everyone a chance to be involved. Finally, a **Special General Meeting of the PEICA membership will be held on Tuesday, April 26th, at 6:30 pm at the Guild**, where the PEICA members will vote on the question of ownership.

I hope that you will share your thoughts on the matter with me, either by email or in person at the February forum, and take part in the vote in April.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'GD', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Greg Doran, PhD
Chair, PEICA Board of Directors

Encl.