

October 31, 2003

Dear Colleague and Associate Member,

As in the world of politics, business and education, September/October marks the beginning of a new season for RHOMA. A fall newsletter therefore seems timely. It is particularly true this year as our upswing in membership continues "unabated". This means, amongst other things, that there is an urgent need to distribute the attached new directory which adds and sometimes corrects, the names, addresses etc.,... of both longstanding and new members. The Directing Group is aware, of course, that an up to date directory is one of RHOMA's most valued benefits.

New Members

Many new Government retirees who have served as Canadian Heads of Mission abroad have agreed to join RHOMA over the last year. Twenty-four to be precise. I would like to extend a special word of welcome to each one of them and thought it might be of interest to the whole membership to have their names listed in order of their dates of acceptance. Here it is, starting from October 2002. Brian Northgrave, Ben Pflanz, André Simard, the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell, Nick Hare, Stan Gooch, Janet Zukowsky, Jacques Demers, Patricia Marsden Dole, Paul Frazer, Al Stewart, Terry Colfer, Dilys Buckley-Jones, John de Chastelain, Larry Dickenson, Jean Guy Saint Martin, Michel de Goumois, Jean McCloskey, Gerald Skinner, Peter Campbell, Michael Molloy, Gilles Duguay and Rod Irwin. To spare you the task of counting RHOMA's total membership, we have now 253 dues paying members and 63 associate members. A large *confrérie* indeed which leads me to talk about our on-going social activities and possible new ones.

Social Activities

Third Wednesday Luncheons

I am pleased to report that our program of social activities remains very active, especially our third Wednesday luncheons at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club. At the time of writing, we have had eight speakers since January 2003 (no luncheon during the summer) who have managed to draw an average attendance of 40 persons. The luncheons have drawn speakers from fields as varied as journalism, politics, public service and business. Our speaker on September 17 was Tom d'Aquino, President of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives whose talk on corporate governance and border security could not have been more timely. Our speaker for October was Jacques Roy who is now Canada's ambassador for sport and, as such, was very much involved with Canada's successful bid for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Jacques is now promoting the candidacy of Hamilton for the Commonwealth Games. The new Deputy Minister of DFAIT, Peter Harder who was to be our speaker on November 19 has had to postpone his talk to March 2004. Our speaker in November will be Gar Pardy, DFAIT's longstanding and recognized expert on Canada's Consular Affairs.

As an aside, I would like to mention again how visiting RHOMANs from outside the capital region are welcome to attend these 3rd Wednesday luncheons. We had the pleasure in September to have had Bill Warden join us from Calgary. Without discriminating against any region of Canada, let me say that the further away you live, the more welcome you are.

RHOMA Annual Reception

Again this year, the Directing Group has decided to hold our annual reception in December. It will be held at DFAIT, on the ninth floor, on Wednesday, December 17, 2003 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. You will find attached the invitation, including the form to be returned with your cheque if you wish to attend by December 10. Your early response would be appreciated as it is important we should know the approximate number of guests a few weeks ahead of time.

Montreal Gathering

As you know, we organized in Montreal last June the first formal RHOMA gathering outside the National Capital Region. The event was very successful as close to 60 members and their spouses and associate members attended. About half of them were non residents of the Montreal region. The weather, the three hour apéro/luncheon at the McGill Faculty Club, the ensuing visit to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the congenial company made it a very pleasant occasion indeed. I would like to say thank you again to Jacques Gignac and Gilles Duguay who made this special event not only possible but delightful.

Proposal for a Victoria RHOMA Gathering

Having this first Montreal success in mind, your Directing Group has now under consideration a proposal for a more adventurous and distant RHOMA encounter. You have guessed it... we are thinking of organizing a three day "encounter" in Victoria, B.C. where RHOMA has its largest component of members outside the National Capital Region. This would be, by far, our most ambitious social undertaking and we need to know from you whether there is enough interest before embarking on its organization.

Here is the idea. We would like to provide for our members, their spouses and our associate members, perhaps a once in a lifetime occasion to meet and quietly enjoy each other's company. We are thinking of a "do" big enough to justify the expense of travelling long distances and, at the same time to attract sufficient interest. Fortunately, we are assured of a warm welcome in Victoria. I have had a number of telephone discussions with Clay Bullis, our man there, and I am pleased to report that Clay is enthusiastic about the project. He already has suggested a three-day get together and an outline of what could take place in the first week of May 2004. This outline includes a gala dinner, perhaps on the first night, followed the next day by a choice of activities such as an excursion to Tofino or golfing and, on the third day, other excursions

(possibly to Salt Spring Island, the Butchard Gardens, or museum visits). All travel arrangements to and from Victoria would have to be made by you individually. On the other hand, Clay and his Victoria RHOMAN committee might, dependent on numbers, be able to negotiate special hotel arrangements and excursions.

In brief, we need to know the degree of interest on the part of our membership before moving forward. We would be hesitant to go ahead unless we thought we could bring together a sufficient number of interested members and their spouses as well as associate members. Our thinking is that a group of about 80 of us would warrant the effort.

Attached therefore is form seeking from you the degree of interest in participating in this three day Victoria "encounter". Grateful if those interested responded early (before the end of the year) to this survey, bearing in mind that a positive answer would constitute only a solid expression of interest but not a firm commitment.

By the way, my wife and I had a long discussion on the appropriate way to call this happening and I will not bore you with the details of the heated family debate except to say that the following list of terms were under active consideration: rally, reunion, encounter, congression, convocation, conclave, pow wow, palaver, rendez-vous. As Victoria would follow Montreal, we almost settled on "RHOMA encounter of the second kind". What do you think?

E-mail

A fair number of members have suggested that RHOMA starts using e-mail as a means of communications. As you will note from the new directory, many members have added their e-mail address to their home address, telephone and fax numbers. It is clear, however, that not all members have e-mail or wish to receive their RHOMA communications this way.

The Directing Group has discussed this matter after consulting PAFSO which, as you know, administrates RHOMA. PAFSO's secretariat told us that it would be unable to manage RHOMA e-mail activity within the current hours established for the administration of RHOMA's activities. Unfortunately, increasing the hours of administration for RHOMA is not possible either at this time.

In conclusion, the Directing Group decided we would continue to send RHOMA communications by ordinary mail as in the past, a situation which does not of course stop individual members from communicating with each other through e-mail. We believe, however, that it would be useful to communicate quickly with at least a part of our membership in special circumstances, particularly so as it concerns the announcement of the deaths of our members. To do so, we have, therefore, nominated a board member - for the time being Brian Buckley - who has kindly agreed to circulate

such urgent information by e-mail to those who have listed their e-mail address in the directory.

Publication of books

We are pleased to announce the publication of Terry Sheehan's new book titled "*Stop and Taste the Wine*". The book is self-published and copies are available from Terry himself.

In Memoriam

I regret to have to report the death of five of our members since our last newsletter: Arthur Blanchette, Michel Gauvin, Ray Anderson, Angus Matheson and C.J. (Van) Van Tighem. RHOMA wishes to extend its condolences to their family.

Best regards,

Marc Faguy
President