

# Ovation Event to Feature Professional Artists

*By Jane Barry, The Greater Saint John Community Foundation*

There is a wealth of local talent rising to the occasion of Saint John's and Rothesay's 2010 anniversaries with a wide array of special arts-related community events. The Greater Saint John Community Foundation will be part of the 2010 celebrations and is building momentum as its organizing committee and participants plan for a community celebration of Arts and Culture and the national designation of Saint John as one of Canada's cultural capitals. Their gala evening November 6 requires months of pre-planning and organization.

Cheryl M.G. Robertson, Foundation Chair notes "We want to provide a way for our community to experience the many facets of visual, performing and creative artists with a connection to our community who enrich our quality of life. By organizing a social occasion featuring vignettes of dance, drama, music, photography and visual art combined with exceptional refreshments in one of our newest and most dramatically located venues, the Marco Polo Cruise Terminal, we think it will be the climax of this year's celebrations."

The foundation is tapping into the volunteer experience of a skilled group of community volunteers led by James C. Irving, Vice President of Brunswick News, as Honorary Chair and Penny Milligan as Chair of the Organizing Committee. "We have a creative team who will be working with local members of the arts community to present both established professional and emerging young talent in an atmosphere we hope will wow our audience. We plan to detail unique elements of the evening over the coming months to build excitement and anticipation", Penny Milligan states.

This will be the first-ever fundraiser the Community Foundation is billing as a way for supporters to give back to the many charitable causes it has supported for over thirty-four years. "Mr. Irving is a strong supporter of the arts giving his time personally to several arts-related organizations" added Ms. Robertson, "we are very pleased to have him associated with our celebration." Penny Milligan, a capable and organized community leader, and her team of seasoned volunteers have a track record of creating appealing and unique events which have supported several local causes. "Ovation" will be an interactive evening reception filled with fine food, festivities, music, exhibits and performances to showcase artists from around our region.

Of the many arts-related elements being planned, one will involve a display and sale of visual art by greater Saint John professional artists, specifically conceived for "Ovation", by their peers, known as "The Tea Towel Team" (TTT). Arts NB, includes in their definition of a professional artist many of the following: an individual who has specialized training in an artistic discipline; is recognized as such by their artistic peers; is committed to devoting more time to the artistic activity if financially feasible; practices an art and offers services in exchange for remuneration; has received professional recognition from the public or peers; has earned a degree, diploma or certificate in fine arts or creative writing from a recognized institution; has presented works to the public; is represented by an agent/dealer, devotes a reasonable percentage of their professional activity to promoting and marketing works and who has a history of public presentation in a professional context.

In 2003, the TTT set out to establish The Professional Visual Artists (PVA) Fund with The Greater Saint John Community Foundation, tailored to support artists' ongoing work with earnings from the fund. They organized a series of events which raised awareness of artists and their work while raising funds. The first was the Art in The City Studio and Gallery Tour. In 2005, Art and Artifacts featured 24 professional artists who each created a significant work of art relating to a New Brunswick Museum artifact. WhoDunIt?, was a rousing success in 2007, and provided an opportunity for art enthusiasts to purchase an original "mystery" art work created and donated by 50 professional visual artists. The PVA Fund dispenses annual awards to professional artists, with the administrative support of the New Brunswick Museum. Allison Murphy and Peggy Smith are the recipients for 2009 and 2010. The vision is that this permanent fund will grow as it is augmented by future gifts and events such as "Ovation".

The TTT will be approaching at least 50 of their professional artist colleagues, inviting them to create a work with a Saint John geographic area "inspiration point" from their personal perspective. They will need time to produce these works of art which will be unveiled November 6. The Artists will be donating half of the proceeds to their PVA Fund and plan to maximize sales by keeping prices as affordable as possible. All works will be 16 X 20. They are planning some creative twists to the showing involving the attendees, which will add to the fun of the evening. ESL Artists' Supplies is helping sponsor this element of Ovation.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation serves as a trustee for charitable, educational and cultural purposes for the benefit of the people of Greater Saint John. Earnings from permanent endowment funds are donated annually to local charities for many worthy causes - youth, seniors, health & medicine, education, the arts, environment and social services, all of which will benefit from "Ovation". More "Ovation" developments will be released over the coming months.



Photo: The Greater Saint John Community Foundation is making plans for a community artistic and cultural event, "Ovation", in November, timed to celebrate Saint John's 225<sup>th</sup> and Rothesay's 150<sup>th</sup> birthdays and the designation of Saint John as one of Canada's "Cultural Capitals". "Ovation" will pay tribute to the visual, musical, literary and dramatic arts and artists of Greater Saint John and feature a display and sale of visual art, specifically created for "Ovation" by greater Saint John professional artists including Lynn Wigginton, Suzanne Hill and Carol Taylor.



*Community Profile is a weekly column highlighting community causes and work done by non-profit organizations in the Greater Saint John area. It is contributed by Jane Barry, executive director of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation. Contact the foundation at 506-672-8880.*

*To view other Community Profiles go to [www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca](http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca)*