



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES JOURNALISTES ET ECRIVAINS DU TOURISME
WORLD FEDERATION OF TRAVEL JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS
FEDERACION MUNDIAL DE PERIODISTAS Y ESCRITORES DE TURISMO

FIJET NEWSLETTER – August, 2012



Alexandria, Egypt. Site of the 54th FIJET World Congress from September 28-October 4, 2012

“What you've done becomes the judge of what you're going to do -- especially in other people's minds. When you're traveling, you are what you are right there and then. People don't have your past to hold against you. No yesterdays on the road”. – **William Least Heat Moon, Blue Highways**

Important Information

August 31, 2012 – Final deadline for registering for the FIJET World Congress in Egypt. Full payment for the Congress must be received by this date or your registration will be cancelled.

September 15, 2012 – Final deadline for cancellation for full refund of your Congress fees. If you cancel your reservation, for any reason, after that date, you will not receive a refund.

September 30, 2012 – Deadline for submitting articles and stories from the Board of Directors meeting in the Czech Republic. If you miss this deadline, you will not be allowed to attend the upcoming Congress and you are subject to being expelled from FIJET.

Contents:

From the Editor's Desk – Jim sees similarities between his building project and the upcoming FIJET elections, notes that the deadline for registering for the Congress has been extended to August 31 and reminds those who attended the Board of Directors meeting in the Czech Republic that the deadline for sending in your published stories is September 30.

FIJET News – Golden Apple to be presented to Hamamonu district in Turkey; Details on the procedure for registering for the Congress; List of candidates for the upcoming elections and the list of countries allowed to vote.

Congress News – Details about the 54th FIJET World Congress in Egypt including a backgrounder by Jim Thompson, details on payments, facts about the country and informations on the fees and payments.

Congress Schedule – The tentative schedule of events for the 54th FIJET World Congress in Egypt.

News from Around FIJET – **News from Around FIJET** – Bob Fisher (*TravelJourno* – FIJET, North America) explores the culture of Canada's original inhabitants during the unofficial inauguration of the Siksika Nation-Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park Interpretive Centre

Editor:

Jim Thompson (jim@traveljourno.com)

Important note:

The newsletter is open to all members of FIJET. Your news, articles, and other contributions are welcomed and appreciated. Please send all submissions for consideration to the newsletter editors.

FIJET Website: <http://www.fijet-web.com> or <http://www.fijet.net>

NOTE: Previous newsletters can be found on the website.

Update your Email. We are doing all that we can to ensure that all members of FIJET receive the newsletter via email each month. However, we are limited in this effort by the email addresses that are provided to us. If you have recently changed your email, or you or someone in your association is not receiving the newsletter, please provide us with the current address. This is the ONLY way to insure that you receive the newsletter in your email box. If you do not have an email address or have not been getting the newsletter, you can access it via the FIJET website (<http://www.fijet.net>) .



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Building for the Future

More than a year ago, I decided it was time for some repairs around my house. It was a simple idea that sounded good at the time. Little did I know that this 'simple idea' would turn into a daily grind of endless decisions, on-going problems and lots of frustration.

But that is the way with worthwhile projects. They take lots of time, tremendous effort and the commitment and conviction to see the project through to the very end – no matter what comes up along the way.

In FIJET, we are facing a similar **need to repair our house**. As good as things sometimes seem to be, there are many areas that need improvement. There are also many things that need to be changed, done away with or added. The upcoming **elections** are the vehicle for a process that can **change the fundamental structure of our organization** and build a strong architecture for the future.

This also means **considering new approaches**. Like renovating an old house, sometimes you have to tear down some of the old structure before you can build additions. You may also need to call in outside architects to find a new and more modern look. I am sorry to say but in some cases, **members cling to the 'old ways'** and refuse to entertain the idea of looking at new approaches and new ideas.



As journalists, we must be open to talking about any issues that face us and to discuss possible solutions **without personal feelings** becoming a part of the discussion. When building a house, you don't argue with the contractor over which nail to use, which hammer he will use to drive the nail or exactly where the nail is placed.

There are times when it seems that we have lost our vision of the big picture. **You must first dream the house before it can be built.**

I urge you to look over the candidate statements in this issue of the newsletter and consider carefully **who is best equipped to provide the change, direction and leadership that is needed**. We cannot sit back and expect FIJET to run itself or expect that the problems facing us will simply go away. Like an old house, without care and updating, **the structure can collapse**.

The elections are serious and you must approach them with an open mind and a concern for who can best serve FIJET and put us on the **best path for the future**.



On another topic, in case you missed the email, the deadline for pre-registering for the FIJET World Congress in Egypt has been extended to **August 31**. You must **fill out the registration form on the FIJET website** (see this newsletter for details and instructions) in order to be allowed to attend the Congress. You should also **inform your Association President** of your desire to attend the Congress. He/she will then send a confirmation email to the Secretary General confirming that you are a valid member and allowed to attend the Congress.

I also want to remind the members of the Board of Directors and those who attended

the Board meeting in the Czech Republic that your **published stories are due at the end of September**. Anyone attending that meeting is **required under the bylaws to write and publish** at least one article about the Czech Republic. Failure to do this will mean that you will not be allowed to attend a future Congress, Board meeting or other event and you will be subject to being expelled from FIJET. If this is the second time that you have missed such a deadline (failure to write following a meeting or Congress) then your membership will be revoked.

Jim Thompson
FIJET Executive Committee
Director of FIJET Congresses & Meetings

FIJET NEWS

2012 Congress in Egypt – The 2012 FIJET World Congress will be in Egypt from September 28 – October 4, 2012. Salah and Mohamed Attia are working hard to make this a marvelous Congress with plenty of interesting surprises. Full details on registration, payment of fees, schedule of events, etc. are contained in this newsletter.

Golden Apple to be Awarded to the Hamamonu District in Turkey

In September, FIJET will award the Pomme d'Or (Golden Apple) to the Hamamönü-Altındağ district near Ankara. The Hamamonu district, which is located in the center of the city of Altındağ (meaning 'old Ankara'), shows Turkey as it once was.

Following a recent and remarkable restoration process, the dilapidated buildings and aging streets of Hamamonu has emerged as a place frozen in time and reflecting the traditional styles of both the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic.

The regeneration of the Hamamonu district became a priority for Ankara Cultural Tourism because of its historical interest and central location. In a major civic project, Altındağ Municipality

worked hard to restore the original charm of the district. The result was that local inhabitants were lured back and it has become an interesting destination for tourists.

During the restoration and expansion project, buildings in some 250 locations – including masjuds and mosques from the Seljuk era – were reconstructed or completely rebuilt.

In all, an area of about 210 hectares was reconstructed and 33 sites were registered with the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board. Today, Hamamonu is a popular place for locals and tourists alike, its treasures and history unveiled for a new generation to enjoy.

Social thanks goes to the sponsors who have provided support for the FIJET delegation presenting the award.

Hotel Barceló Ankara Altinel



Situated in the very heart of Turkey's capital city of Ankara, the Barceló Ankara Altinel hotel (5-star) is the perfect location during you stay in the exciting city.

Within easy reach of all of the main sites of the city - including the Atatürk Mausoleum, markets and the main government and military institutions - it offers a true 'home away from home' for both business and vacation traveler.



The hotel offers the best city attractions right at the doorstep. Located in the city center, in Tandogan Square, it is just 500-meters from Atatürk Mausoleum and less than 10 minutes by metro or taxi from the most important government institutions and commercial areas.

The hotel offers the finest selections in its highly rated restaurants.

For more information visit their website at:

http://www.barcelo.com/BarceloHotels/en_GB/hotels/Turkey/Ankara/hotel-barcelo-ankara-altinel/general-description.aspx

Tafoni Evleri

With Ortahisar Castle looming high above and the panorama of the village valley below, Tafoni Evleri is like no other vacation experience.

In 2006 a series of houses dating from the 18th century were purchased for the purpose of developing an authentic rock hotel. Because Cappadocia is a UNESCO site, these historic houses have undergone a series of approvals for development by the Historical Monuments Council established for the preservation of Cappadocia.





Beautiful marble, travertine and natural stone, from Cappadocia and other areas of Turkey, were used in the restoration. Uniquely designed ironwork, produced by a local Cappadocia master craftsman, enhances both the interior and exterior of Tafoni Evleri. The artisans, furniture builders and carpenters of Ankara have custom designed furnishings, placing Tafoni Evleri in a class of its own.

Tafoni Evleri is conveniently located in the village of Ortahisar (means Middle Castle). This is an untouched village in the center of Cappadocia

within a five minute drive from the famous Goreme Rock Church Outdoor Museum and from Urgup, and 10 minutes from the fairy chimneys and the underground city.

For more information visit, <http://tafonievleri.com/>

Turkish Airlines



Turkish Airlines (THY) began 78 years ago with only five planes. Today, the same passion and enthusiasm that marked its beginnings, manifests itself with 180 (passenger and cargo) aircraft. On the 78th year of anniversary, THY has the youngest fleet in Europe. With the plan for new aircraft coming in the two years, both the fleet age will decrease and service quality will be strengthened.

Their commitment to quality and passenger service is reflected in industry recognition. The Skytrax evaluation results, which is considered as the Oscar of the aviation sector, THY's progress in 2009 and 2010 are both extraordinary. In both 2009 and 2010, THY was chosen as the best airline of the Southern Europe and (in 2010) as the third best airline in Europe. The amenities organized by Turkish Do&Co to the economy class passengers are chosen as the best in the world.

Similarly, along with the supervision of Skytrax, THY received 4-stars in all of the categories of supervision and sustained its unique status in Europe in this regard. First class was given a remarkable 4.5-stars out of a possible 5.

In all, Turkish Airlines was chosen as the winner of the three top categories, "Best Airline Europe," "Best Premium Economy Seats" for its Comfort Class seats and "Best Airline Southern Europe" by SkyTrax.



For more information, visit: <http://www.turkishairlines.com/>

Ottoman Hotel Imperial – Istanbul, Turkey

Located in the very heart of traditional Istanbul, the Ottoman Hotel Imperial is a wondrous blending of traditional Turkish hospitality and comfort with elegant premium service and an unbeatable view of Hagia Sophia Museum and Sultanahmet Square. Add a taste of Ottoman and Istanbul cuisine and you have one of the world's legendary hotels.



With its exquisitely furnished guest rooms reflecting the Ottoman art, trend-setting restaurants and bars, extensive guest services and in-house amenities, Ottoman Hotel Imperial responds to the needs of the most demanding leisure and business travelers.



Ottoman Hotel Imperial is situated in a truly premium location, surrounded by all the major historical and cultural sites in the heart of the old city, Sultanahmet, with a breath-taking view of the impressive Hagia Sophia Museum. This is an inspiring location all year around, which is just walking distance from Sultanahmet Square, the main shopping and harbor districts. The hotel is only 16 km away from Istanbul International Ataturk Airport and 44 km away from the Sabiha Gokcen Airport which is located on the asian side of the city.

Combining contemporary elegance, an intimate ambience and unparalleled service, Imperial's restaurants re-create the classic "Ottoman Palace" dining experience in an impressive, relaxing and welcoming way, embracing a passion for tradition and excellence.

For more information, visit: <http://www.ottomanhotelimperial.com/>

Procedure for Registering for the 54th FIJET World Congress – In order to avoid delays and confusion, registration for the upcoming FIJET World Congress in Egypt will be done in several manners. In order to insure that that there are no problems, we ask that you register on the FIJET website (just as you have done for the past three years). Additionally, the presidents of the National Associations should send the list of their members who are planning to attend to FIJET president Tijani Haddad and to FIJET Secretary General, Jacques Campe.

Here is the procedure for registering on the FIJET website:

1. Members who want to attend the 2012 FIJET World Congress in Egypt should go to the FIJET website (<http://www.fijet.net>). Information about the Congress (fees, schedule, background, payment information, etc.) can be found in the Congress Section.

To access this section, you can click on **CONGRESS** which is in red at the top of the page, click on "Congress" in the upper (gold) menu bar or use the following link:
http://www.fijet.net/index.cfm/Congress_Information_and_Background

- From the Congress section, you can browse the various sections by clicking on the menu items on the left side of the page.
- To register, select “Event Registration” which is the last menu item on the left side of the page. You will need your member number to register. If you forgot it, you can have it sent to your email address (the one you used to register as a member) by clicking on the item marked “If you forgot your Member ID click here.”

Please remember that this is a “Pre-Registration” and just filling out the form DOES NOT guarantee that you will be allowed to attend the Congress.

As in the past, once we have determined that you are a qualified member, your name (and those from your association who have registered for the Congress) will be sent to your Association President. He/she will make the final selection of who is allowed to attend from your Association based on the quota for that country. Qualified FIJET members who are not selected will be placed on a waiting list. If there are additional spaces, selections will be made from this waiting list.



Any member who did not write and publish a story following a previous Congress will NOT be allowed to attend the Congress in accordance with the FIJET Bylaws.

Details about fees, airfare discounts and tours can be found on the FIJET website in the Congress section.

If you have questions, please direct them to **Jacques Campe**, FIJET Secretary General (jacques.campe@cegetel.net). Jacques is also responsible for providing you with a letter needed to obtain the discount on Egypt Air (click on “Airline Flights” menu in the Congress section of the FIJET website for details).

I strongly advise that you do not make final travel plans until you have been confirmed as being able to attend the Congress.

Further details about the Congress will be made available on the FIJET website.

2012 FIJET Elections – Here is a list of the candidates for election to the FIJET Executive Committee.

Candidates for President:

Drago BULC (Slovenia)
Tijani HADDAD (Tunisia)

Candidates for the Executive Committee:

Salah ATTIA (Egypt)
Antonio BONELLI (Italy)
Tina CUBRILO (Croatia)
Anais DE MELO (Mexico)
Miguel Angel GONZALEZ SUAREZ (Spain)
Miroslav NAVARA (Czech Republic)
Anna Plenzler (Poland)
Victor RADULESCU (Romania) JPG
Walter ROGGEMAN (Belgium)
Bernadette ROUX-BONNETAIN (France)
Ertan SANDIKCIOGLU (Turkey)
Eytan SHABI (Israel)
Marina Petrova SLYESARYEVA (Ukraine)
Plamen STAREV (Bulgaria)
Natalya TARASENKO (Russia)
Jim THOMPSON (USA)
Georges YOUNES (Lebanon)



National Associations Allowed to Vote:

Belgium (BFTP)	Italy	Spain
Bulgaria	Lebanon	Sweden
Croatia	Libya	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Mexico	Tunisia
Egypt	Poland	Turkey
France	Romania	Ukraine
Germany	Russia	USA
Greece	Serbia	
Israel	Slovenia	

The elections will be conducted in Egypt prior to the official start of the Congress according to the rules set forth in the FIJET Bylaws and the FIJET Election Procedures under the guidance of the Elections Sub-Committee.

The Elections Sub-Committee is comprised of: chairperson Marijana Rebic (Croatia), Frans Rombots (Belgium) and Ryker Lomas (USA/Canada).

NOTE: Please see the candidate statements at the end of this newsletter. All candidates were allowed to enter a statement. All statements were strictly limited to no more than 250 words.

CONGRESS NEWS

FIJET RETURNS TO EGYPT

By Jim Thompson

As the oldest tourist destination on earth, Egypt is a fitting location for the 54th FIJET World Congress. Our journey will take us from the bright lights and sophistication of Cairo to the timeless wonders of Alexandria.

BACKGROUND



Ancient Greeks and Romans were among the first to travel to this land as tourists and to stand in amazement at the grand scale of the Pyramids and the Colossi of Thebes.

Today, the attraction for tourists is not only the ancient monuments of the Nile Valley and the souks, mosques and madrassas of Islamic Cairo, but Egypt's natural wonders – like the Red Sea, the deserts, dunes and haunting

rockscapes – and its modern shopping areas and exciting nightlife.

The result is a multi-layered culture that blends ancient with modern, grand with humble and secular with spiritual. The people (fellaheen) of the Nile and Bedouin tribes of the desert live much as their ancestors did a thousand years ago. Other communities include the Nubians of the far south, and the Coptic Christians, who trace their ancestry back to the time of the great Pharaohs. They are united by a love of their homeland, extended family ties, dignity, warmth and hospitality towards strangers. Though most visitors are drawn to Egypt by its monuments, the enduring memory is likely to be of its people and their way of life.

The 54th FIJET World Congress begins in the ancient and timeless city of Cairo (see the schedule for full details on the trip).

THE TIMELESS CITY

Cairo, known officially as al-Qāhirah, is one of the world's largest urban areas and offers many sites for the visitor, including the Great Pyramids at Giza which lie on the far edge of the city. Here you can also visit ancient temples, tombs, Christian churches, magnificent Muslim monuments, and of course, the Egyptian Antiquities Museum.





Cairo itself is an amazing city full of life and movement. Twenty-Four hours a day, it is alive with the noise of honking horns, children playing in the streets and merchants selling their wares and services. At the same time, it offers great culture that includes art galleries and music halls along with some of the grandest accommodations and restaurants in the world.

Visitors to Cairo also find an incredible selection of

shopping, leisure activities and nightlife. Shopping ranges from the famous Khan el-Khalili souk, (or bazaar) largely unchanged since the 14th century, to modern air-conditioned centers displaying the latest fashions. Particularly good buys are spices, perfumes, gold, silver, carpets, brass and copperware, leatherwork, glass and ceramics. Try some of the famous street markets, like Wekala al-Balaq, for fabrics, including Egyptian cotton, the Tentmakers Bazaar for appliqué-work, Mohammed Ali Street for musical instruments and, although you probably won't want to buy, the Camel Market makes a fascinating trip. This is, and has been for over a thousand years, truly a shopper's paradise.

While in Cairo, our base will be the fabulous Mena House. Surrounded by 40 acres of lush gardens, with the breathtaking Great Pyramids of Giza standing proudly as they have for thousands of years, you will enjoy all the comforts of the modern world with the ancient wonders just outside your door.

Step into your room and relax in splendor in the spacious open design, with high ceilings and sliding glass doors letting in abundant natural light. With a rich contemporary style, plush furnishings, and beautiful wood floors, each room is like an elegant home away from home, inviting you to immerse yourself in the beauty of your surroundings. At Mena House Oberoi, explore all that Cairo has to offer, and rest in luxuries pharaohs could only dream of.



In Alexandria our home will be the wonderful HInan Palestine Hotel.

ALEXANDRIA



Founded by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, Alexandria, also known as “The Pearl of the Mediterranean,” was once one of the most prominent cities of the ancient world, known as the capital of the arts and science at the time. It is home to the Pharos Lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, as well as the enormous Library of Alexandria. Branded for its cooling sea breeze and golden-sand beaches, remnants of the City’s greatness can still be found here.

Only 225km from Cairo, Helnan Palestine hotel is approximately a 2.5-hour drive from the capital. The hotel encompasses 200 spacious rooms with balconies, 16 luxuriously appointed suites and a grand penthouse, all of which provide spectacular views of the Mediterranean Sea and the Montazah Royal Gardens. Tastefully furnishes and equipped with a full range of modern amenities, such as; TV, satellite channels & DVD/CD player, direct international telephone line, high speed internet, mini bar, complimentary tea & coffee tray, safety box, hairdryer, in-room safety deposit box, central air-conditioning and 24-hour room service.

EGYPT FACTS

- The Arab Republic of Egypt covers 1,001,450 square kilometers, of which 96.4 percent is desert; only the Nile Valley, its Delta and some oases are fertile.

- Egypt's population of 75 million is twice that of the next most populous Arab country (Algeria) and a quarter of the population of the Arab world. Its ethnic profile is Eastern Hamitic – Egyptians, Bedouin, Nubians and Berbers account for 99 percent – with tiny minorities of Greeks, Armenians and others. Arabic is universally spoken; Nubian or Siwi locally. Islam is the national religion, with some 96 percent followers; almost all the rest are Coptic Orthodox Christians.



- Tourism is Egypt's largest money-earner, followed by tolls on the Suez Canal, and exports of oil, petroleum products, textiles and natural gas.

- Language – Arabic with an Egyptian dialect, though a significant percentage of the educated population are capable in English, French and/or Italian.

- Currency – Egyptian Pound, as in the rest of Egypt, though US Dollars and Euros are freely exchanged.

Exchange rate: 1 Euro =7.42 Egyptian Pounds / 1 USD = 6.06 Egyptian Pounds

- Country dialing code: 20.

- Religion – 90-94 % Muslim, most of the rest are Coptic Christian. Most Muslims are Sunni, though no specific percentages seem to be available. While Copts make up the largest percentage of Christians, there is a small, declining number of Catholics, and apparently an increasing number of Protestants, mostly Episcopal.

- Time zone – GMT + 2.

- Electricity – 220 volts AC, 50Hz; round two-pin plugs are used.

- Average temperature during the day in October in Alexandria is 27°C (81°F) / 18°C (64°F) at night.

- Average temperature during the day in October in Cairo is 29°C (84°F) / 18°C (64°F) at night.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Our friend and colleague, Salah Attia has provided the following information:



"We have signed an agreement with Egypt Air granting the following discounts:

30% discount on any available airfare for the members participating in the Congress.

20% discount on any available airfare for the accompanying persons"

In order to obtain the discount, you will need an official letter from FIJET to Egypt Air and a copy of a letter in Arabic that has been provided by Egypt Air. Both of these documents can be obtained from the FIJET Secretary General Jacques Campe.

The letters will be sent to members after they have registered and been approved to attend the Congress.

FEES & PAYMENTS

The Fees for the 54th FIJET World Congress in Egypt (September 28-October 4, 2012) will be as follows:

FIJET Members: 325-Euros

Companions: 375-Euros (companions must accompany a member and must stay in the same room as the member. Companions cannot have a separate room)

Single Room Supplement: 50-Euros (only 20 single rooms are available, so some members may be forced to share a room with another member)

Extra days before/after the congress in Cairo: 100-Euros per night

Here is the account information for the FIJET account in France. Please send payment for the Congress to this account.

NOTE: The BIC code for the Lyon Bank is CMCIFRPP

EURO Account

Identifiant international de compte bancaire

IBAN (International Bank Account Number)

FR76 1009 6180 0200 0539 7850 165

BIC Code: CMCIFRPP

BANK

CICLyonnaise de Banque – Lyon République - 8 rue de la République F. 69001 LYON

Bank Address

LB LYON REPUBLIQUE

8 rue de la République

F. 69001 LYON

Tél. 00 338 20 01 01 02

Titulaire du compte (Account Owner)

F I J E T

Chez Mme Bernadette ROUX

7 RUE DES GANTRIES

F. 69130 ECULLY

NOTE: If you have any questions, please contact Bernadette (FIJET Treasurer) at berfr.rouxbonnetain@free.fr or via phone at: Tél. 00 33 (0)4 78 33 29 58



CONGRESS SCHEDULE



FIJET World Congress Egypt September 28 - October 4, 2012

(NOTE: This is a preliminary program that is subject to change. Work is currently being done on the specific tours and stops during the Congress.)

Friday, September 28, 2012

Arrival at Cairo Airport

Hotel Check-in. Mena House Oberoi

<http://www.touregypt.net/egypt-info/magazine-mag07012000-magf2a.htm>

Saturday, September 29, 2012

8.30 - Breakfast

9.00 - EC meeting

10.00 - Opening ceremony of the Congress

11.00 - Board of Directors and elections

11.00 - Visit to the Giza Pyramids for the rest of the members

13.30 – Lunch

15.00 – Meeting of the new EC

19.00 - Sound & Light show at the Giza Pyramids

20.30 - Dinner



Sunday, September 30, 2012

7.00 - Breakfast

8.00 - Departure by Buses to Alexandria (210 km - 3 hours from the hotels) for 3 nights

13.00 - Lunch

Hotel Check-in. Hlnan Palestine Hotel

www.helnan.com/HotelPage.aspx?HID=17&HLID=74

16.00 - Visit to Montazah Palace and then to Bibliotheca Alexandrina - Qaitbey Citadel - Aqua Marina

20.00 - Dinner

Monday, October 1, 2012

8.30 - Breakfast

9.30 - General Assembly

11.00 - Discussion of the theme of the Congress: "Mediterranean Cities One Tourist Destination"

13.00 - The Golden Apple ceremony

14.00 - Lunch

16.00 - Visit to Rosetta

18.00 – Meeting of the Board of Directors

20.30 - Dinner



Tuesday, October 2, 2012

8.00 - Breakfast

9.00 - Departure to Alamein - Visit to Second World War Cemeteries (German - Italian - British)

13.00 - Lunch at one of the famous resorts in the North Coast on the Mediterranean Sea

16.00 - Planting trees ceremony at the Journalists Tourist Village

17.00 - Return to Alexandria

20.00 - Dinner

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

7.00 - Breakfast

8.00 - Back to Cairo by Buses

11.00 - Visit to Egyptian Museum

14.00 - Lunch

Free Afternoon for Shopping

20.30 - Gala Dinner



Thursday, October 4, 2012

Departure

Start of the Post tours. Details of the Post-Congress Tours will be provided in the coming weeks.

NOTES:

- EgyptAir is offering a discount of 30% to the members and 20% to the accompanied persons. Please contact Jacques campe for a letter needed to obtain the discount..
- Single room supplement will be 50-Euros for each person.
- Extra nights rate before or after the Congress are available at a cost of 100-Euros per night.
- We are planning to plant a tree from every country at the Journalists Tourist Village near Alamein. We need a wooden plaque written on it the name of the tree and your country name.
- A special ceremony will be arranged to celebrate the awarding of the Golden Apple to Alexandria during our visit



CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Note: Unfortunately, at the time the newsletter was printed, we did not have photos of all of the candidates. In order not to provide any advantage to any of the candidates, the photos will be added as soon as they are received. The exception are those of the candidates for president since we have both of the needed photos.

Statements are displayed in alphabetical order.

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT

Drago Bulc (Slovenia)

“IMPOSSIBLE IS POSSIBLE”

I've believe that I am the best candidate for the President of FIJET because of:

- Forty years long career as travel journalist and editor at national radio and TV and contributor to several national and international media
- My knowledge of global travel and tourism gained through presence at all the most important international tourism events as well as travelling and reporting from all continents
- I have enough energy and will to make FIJET a true global professional federation of travel journalists and writers and I have the vision to bring in FIJET members from all continents and specially from all tourist countries
- My ideas how to improve financing of FIJET by national and global sponsors



Additionally, I was the successful organization of the jubilee 50th FIJET World Congress, three Academies for Young Travel Journalists, two meetings of travel journalists of Alps-Adria region (Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia), ceremony of Golden Apple in Kobarid, first World Travel Press Wine, bringing to FIJET four new countries (Switzerland, the Netherland, Slovakia and Hungary). Additionally, I served as the active President of FIJET Slovenija, member of the FIJET Executive Committee, Deputy Treasurer and Executive Director of FIJET for Europe and implement in practice the slogan: “DON'T ASK WHAT FIJET CAN DO FOR YOU, ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR FIJET”

In my private life and in my professional career, my slogan is the “IMPOSSIBLE IS POSSIBLE” and I shall use it also if I should be elected to the office of FIJET President.

Tijani Haddad (Tunisia)

Being an international organization, FIJET should have a leadership capable of preserving its unity, its cohesion and its image as a member of the international community. My ambition is to enhance the credibility and professionalism of FIJET which should be a strong and influent partner in promoting tourism sector all over the world.

My objective is to inject new blood into our ranks by recruiting and providing specialized tourism training to our young journalists. They are, undoubtedly, FIJET future and should be professionally ready to take over the FIJET Torch.

My wish is to strengthen the role of FIJET national associations. We should encourage bilateral and multilateral activities between them and provide them with necessary financial support.

We should promote the internationalisation of our organization : FIJET should be widely represented in the five continents, mainly in every Tourism destination in the world. I hope the next EC team would consist of homogeneous and sufficiently experienced members capable to carry the heavy responsibility of leading an international organization.

One of my plans consists of remodeling our website which should be our efficient and up to date means of production and communication.

Last but not least, FIJET should contribute to preserving the world heritage, and promoting durable Tourism in the frame of an environmental strategy using renewable energies and saving natural, animal and cultural diversities.

FIJET should be a vector of tolerance, peace and dialogue between civilizations, cultures and religions.

Thank you, dear colleagues, for your confidence

CANDIDATES FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Salah Attia (Egypt)

The strength of the Federation comes first of all from the media materials that are produced by its members, who are the main source of its power. These materials are the proof of credibility of both members and Federation. No influence for both without these materials. No respect to the Federations without this influence.

For these reasons, it is a must to purify our membership record. It is a must that we organize our membership categories, to face the loud voices that we always hear when we organize a meeting. These voices harm the reputation of our Federation, when they say, "They are not journalists".



In my experience in many local and international congresses and meetings, I discovered, among many delegation, members who are not journalists. Some of these were, for example, owners of factories!!

We have to find the right way to get back our fame as a Federation of journalists and travel writers. We have to regain the confidence in our credibility.

We have to re-organize our membership. Only journalists in all media branches have to be active members. Other categories of membership could be associate members. Those associate members include tourism's lecturers and travel industry workers only. No membership for non-journalists or travel industry workers or tourism lecturers.

To regain the credibility, we have to purify our members' records, to re-organize the membership categories, to spread our Federation in all parts of the world. We have to work for a strong and effective FIJET.

Antonio Bonelli (Italy – CIST)

Being a journalist (member of the Italian professional Order of Journalist), expert in national and international tourism, present at the most important world trade fairs with own stands, in Italy and abroad, with a prestigious operating office in Rome (see attached credits), as a new member of the Executive Committee of Fijet, with a long experience from international work, I would carry out a specific role to promote and support the activities of FIJET on both an innovative as a preserving institutional basis.

With my large network of international tourism media contacts, as a member of the Executive Committee of FIJET, I will also be a perfect reference for international journalists; offering the possibility to publish articles in the magazine "ITP Events", media of my group Bonelli Consulting Ltd. since 1954. I have already participated as a member of the FIJET's Executive Committee.

My nomination will be useful considering the actual world situation with increasing integration, creating new challenges for FIJET organization, introducing a sustainable international tourism which respects nature and native cultures. One of my aims would be to promote and maintain an active and fruitful exchange of ideas through international tourism, increasing international relations for a more democratic world.

From my point of view, FIJET's most powerful force, our strongest resource, is all our members. My election would permit me to work from this angle, bringing enthusiasm and new ideas to all our members and use them as feedback for new inspiration for the future!

Tina Cubrilo (Croatia)

Proposals for improving FIJET activities:

I apply for re-election at FIJET Executive Board because I think I can contribute to its work and promotion. I have proven it by my work and engagement not only in my country but also at international level contributing to FIJET reputation.

- Compose FIJET book (shortly about us, our mission, what do we do) and send it across the world – in ministries of tourism, national tourism organizations, professional media and tourism associations – to promote FIJET’s mission more strongly
- Enforce the cooperation with UNWTO and SKAL organizations
- Enforce the cooperation with branches and among members
- Make FIJET more visible across the globe
- Enforce the cooperation with colleagues from neighboring countries
- Enforce the cooperation with partners and sponsors
- Bid at FIJET projects in promotion and new products to obtain finances for our activities
- Contribution in organizing the next congress on board cruise;

Anais de Melo (Mexico)

I’ve been in FIJET for about 10 years and have always been of service in any way. I speak 5 languages fluently, have lots of international connections that could be very helpful.

I think FIJET is a great Federation that needs strong people who like to work and believe that things can get done, no matter how hard or how far.

I am the President of FIJET/MEXICO, an Association that I started from scratch a year ago. Today, exactly a year after I founded it, it is the strongest Press Tourism Association in Mexico; we are Mexico’s most powerful Travel Writers Association thanks to my hard work and perseverance.

I like to think “out of the box” and I think that FIJET has come to a point that it needs people with “guts” and positive energy. I am not afraid to speak my mind. In FIJET we cannot procrastinate anymore. It needs hard working people, smart people, and “go getters”.

I hope you will vote for the best candidate, not because he or she is your friend, but because you truly believe that it is the best person for the job. The change has to start with YOU “the voter”.

I’m your best choice.

Miroslav Navara (Czech Republic)

From “Golden sixties” of the last century, when I started my employment in tourism, all my life is connected with FIJET. First years as a Federal Secretary of the Czech Club of FIJET, later on as a member of Board of Directors – as a president of the Czech Association, after Congress in Argentina as FIJET Treasurer (responsibility taken after René van Hoof, started with zero, finishing after nine years with more than 30 thousand USD). Finally as a member of EC as the second FIJET Vice-president.

With FIJET we had opportunities to travel to many interesting and nice foreign destinations and to inform thousands of our readers and listeners about the travel possibilities through our publications. Now I am feeling as member of FIJET family and I think as my duty to return as much as possible back to FIJET members.

That’s why I prepared several meetings of EC and BoD in the Czech Republic, together with Petr Kulhanek FIJET Congress in Karlovy Vary, and why I am organizing this year again EC +

BoD in Prague and South Bohemia – one of the nicest part of the Czech Republic. That's why I prepared - together with GS - 50 years anniversary brochure of FIJET members, and I am ensuring ID cards and every year stamps for all FIJET members. I am in a very good form – so I want to continue with maximum effort for FIJET as a member of EC. That is my motivation...

Anna Plenzler (Poland)

I have been involved in work with FIJET since 1988. My main activities were in the 1990s, when I was a member of the EC and for one term the vice president of FIJET. I have been working for FIJET as good as I could. During this time I also organized one seminar for young journalists and three meetings of the Executive Committee in Poland (which were free of charge, including flight tickets).

I am a journalist and writer. I published some books about history and tourism as well as small guide books. I have been also giving lectures on tourism at University School of Physical Education in Poznan.

As situation in Poland Association is clear, I would like to come back to my former international activity.

FIJET needs new members, especially in Asia and South America, and the new Executive Committee should focus its activity on making the organization bigger and stronger. It is also very important to bring back some associations in Europe because we lost some members.

The situation of FIJET has changed last years and I would like to have an opportunity to work in crating the new image of this organization and in developing it.

Victor Radulescu (Romania)

I organized the 53th FIJET World Congress in Romania. The result – which brought many beautiful moments in FIJET's life – was due to my strength and organizing.. I am honored that so many colleagues, in their articles, considered it as one of the most beautiful of FIJET Congresses. If you liked Romania, be sure I can do it anywhere, anytime and I will never disappoint.

In 2009, I organized a meeting of the Board of Directors, a meeting of the Executive Committee and an impressive Golden Apple Ceremony (in the presence of thousands people and the Minister of Tourism) in Romania.

In 2010, I organized the Gala Awards for FIJET-Romania (considered the most beautiful event of the Romanian Tourism).

People, facts, events. We can't pass over them. In my view, we should carve a path to the future while increasing the credibility of FIJET around the world. This will take dedication, hard work and skills from experienced people like me.

I propose that we begin a program to exchange ideas between the National Associations and that we improve our advertising, bilateral visits, the member directory and the FIJET website. I have already begun discussions with several large airlines to support and underwrite our travel in the exchange for reports.

Further, it is important to establish a connection with Tourism Ministries around the world in order to increase the credibility and profile of FIJET.

The word "FIJET" should become universally known, so everyone will say:

"Sorry to be perfect!"

Walter Roggeman (Belgium – UBJET)

Some time ago there was a very popular song "I'm proud to be a Belgian". And so am I, even more so today: July 21, our national holiday.

But, apart from this, I feel myself even more as a world citizen and that's why I feel good in an international institution like FIJET where friendship exists between colleagues from all over the world..

Since 20 years now, I am the President of UBJET, the Belgian Association of Travel Journalists and Writers which, together with the French association, founded FIJET in 1954. We are still very proud of that.

I have also been a loyal member of FIJET's Board of Directors for many years now and I feel the time has come to do more and offer my experience as a multilingual journalist, author and publisher to our dear Association. Together with the other members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors I will pursue our common goal to enhance further FIJET's presence in the world.

Bernadette Roux-Bonnetain (France)

I certainly do not need to remind you of the very close relationship and friendship which have linked in the past the two associations FIJET and AFJET and still do so today. Since the creation of FIJET in 1954 the same aim remains: to create a world-wide network of travel journalists and writers and to help mutual understanding.

I hereby submit my candidacy for the Executive Committee of the FIJET.

I am convinced that with my experience as a president of AFJET since 2009 as well as a treasurer of FIJET I can contribute to the further development of our Association in offering my professional competence, dynamism and rigour as well as my generosity to the benefit of all members.

If I was to be elected, I will spare no effort in helping the FIJET to strengthen its position as an International key player in the world of tourism journalism.

Ertan Sandikçioğlu (Turkey)

From the first day I became a member of ATURJET and FIJET, I learned the importance and the problems of working with an international group. Over time, this has resulted in many good things for both organizations.

Clearly, the work that I did was appreciated by the current Executive Committee as proven by their unforgettable gesture of appointing me to replace my brother, Özcan, following his unfortunate passing.

There are many issues that must be addressed by the Executive Committee and I believe that I can be an important part of making a difference for all of the members, just as my brother did during his many years of service.

It has been suggested that the activities that have made FIJET strong, like the Young Journalists Academy, the free exchange of ideas and assistance among Associations may disappear unless we re-dedicate our efforts to preserving and improving our work, our activities and our ideas.

I want to be a part of this improvement of FIJET for the sake of all the members. I know there is a lot to be done, but I also know that I owe a lot to FIJET. I will repay my debt by dedicating myself to working as hard as I can to make FIJET stronger and to ensure that it continues to grow.

My priority is to make it clear that FIJET is not a travel agency, but a truly international association for Travel Journalists and writers. I ask for your vote.

Miguel Ángel González Suárez (Spain – FIJETESPANA)

I would like to stand for election to member of Executive Committee FIJET. The main reason is that FIJET ESPAÑA should continue taking the importance it deserves as Spain is at the top of the tourism industry.

The current FIJET Vice President and also FIJET España President has decided to resign as he would like to give way to new generations. In this case and for this reason, I am very pleased to present my candidacy.

I am from Canary Islands. As you know, these islands are one of the most important tourist destination in the World. I have been involved in tourist matters all my large career. I am also the General Manager of CIT Radio.

I would like to belong to the Executive Committee of the Federation of journalists. I believe, that my large experience in tourism and journalism make me a good candidate to contribute to FIJET government. If I am elected, for sure, I will give my best to help to the development to this federation if possible.

I love to work together with International colleagues, who I met a few years ago and with whom, every year, I meet and interchange good experiences from our countries and jobs.

I have been attending the Board of Directors, FIJET Congress and others, as member of FIJET España. At those events, I have had the opportunity to give and receive from all my colleagues great friendship and fellowship.

Eytan Shabi (Israel)

My name is Eytan Shabi, from ISRAEL. I have been a member of FIJET since 1970,

I established its Israeli chapter - ISJET and have been a proud member of FIJET E.C. Board for some years now.

I am a seasoned travel journalist, editor, and have also had the pleasure of hosting two very successful FIJET congresses in Israel (1966 and 1978).

Its hard to imagine a more close relationship, or one that I am more proud of - than the one I have enjoyed with FIJET and with so many of you. I therefore know you'd appreciate the fact I opted to keep my statement short of its 250 allocated words.

2012 is the year of our 54th world congress – to be held in Egypt. FIJET is young compared to this ancient location, but over the years we have grown it together and managed to build a grand organization. I plan to use my vast experience and my ability to learn and replicate our past successes - in building our future. I believe that looking after our roots enables us to grow new leaves.

I would like to be able to continuously contribute to FIJET long tern success - nourish and grow this organization of ours. Therefore I am re-applying this year and humbly ask for your vote.

Natalia Tarasenko (Russia)

Russia has been the member of FIJET since 1968, throughout it has been an active member of the organization. Representatives of former Soviet Union were repeatedly elected to FIJET's EC.

UJETRus was registered in February 2001.

Now organization combine about 100 real journalists from Ekaterinburg, St.-Peterburg, Novosibirsk and other towns of Russia. Over past four years the organization has increase more than twice. The Russian Federation is the largest country of the world. It's Asian part extends from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean. In our plans - to attract more Journalists from Asian part of Russia. FIJET needs new young journalists.

However, there have been no Russian representative on the FIJET EC in the past twenty years.

In May of 2002 we offered hospitality in Moscow for the EC of FIJET, including the complete accommodation and flights.

We promote FIJET via Russian Union of Journalists and Russian mass media. UJETRus members made hundreds publications in the popular Russian press about FIJET. We always paid our fees in time.

In 1988 in Susdal was 31th Congress of FIJET. Grate changes has taken place in our country since that. Now Russia is a country with one of the most rapidly developing tourism industry in Eastern Europe. In Russia will be Summit APEC in 2012, the Olympic Games in 2014, International World Cup in 2018.

UJETRus hopes that in the coming years Russia will host the journalists of FIJET.

I am a member of Russian Union of Journalist more than twenty years.

Plamen Starev (Bulgaria)

My first congress was in USA (1992). USD 275 fee, including one-week post-congress tour. Air tickets: USD 200 (Europe – USA – destination-by-choice – Europe). 464 participants. It was “Old FIJET”.

In 1994 in a FIJET brochure is written 2,300 members in 50 associations were publishing articles in 7,250 media to an audience of 500,000,000.

Is there any progress in “New FIJET”?

Therefore I am putting forward my candidature.

Because I do not like the standstill FIJET has come to.

What has to be done?

The federation must restore its éclat.

We have to return times when the name FIJET commanded respect.

FIJET has a membership of 900 journalists from 35 countries. This is an enormous wealth. FIJET must be a profit-making organization! Not to make money from membership fees only.

Fijet.net has to become a bestseller because it represents hundreds of brilliant people of the pen, it can become a priceless archive of authors, publications, contacts... Fijet.net must generate revenue.

The practice of pay to write is humiliating. Prominent journalists receive dozens of invitations for free for visits. We are paying more and more for the right to write an article.

We must write! To restore the fame of FIJET, to choose the venues of our congresses according benefits, to stop the increase of the congress fees...

I rely on all of you to complete the list and to revive former high stature in the world of FIJET and its members – skilled pros.

Marina Slesareva (Ukraine)

Marina was one of the founders of FIJET department in Ukraine and more than 15 years as the first deputy minister of Crimean tourism and resorts. She has provided comprehensive assistance for strengthening and development of FIJET in Ukraine.

Hundreds of articles and books, in which are promoted not only Crimean tourism, but the tourism of the countries that visited the Crimean journalists (Tunisia, Morocco, Slovenia, Egypt, Czech Republic, Romania, China, Turkey, etc.), were written by the Crimean journalists-members of FIJET.

A lot of events were held, the main aim of which was to promote FIJET in Crimea.

Under her control, a FIJET Congress was held in Crimea (1999) and a meeting of the Executive Committee in 2009.

Marina has valuable experience in the field of tourism. She received several government awards. She also received the title of "The Honored Worker of Crimean Tourism and Resorts", Marina is the laureate of the Crimean prize for peacekeeping activity.

She established and operated several community organizations such as the Association of Hospitality, Association of amateurs of active tourism, Association of small hotels and hotels in Crimea, with which the Crimean branch of FIJET cooperates.

At the present time, as adviser to the vice-premier of Crimea under the tourism questions, Marina works to strengthen the international relations between Crimea and other countries. She cooperates with several journalistic publishers, such as: newspaper "Terra Tavnica", "Crimskaya Pravda", magazines "Vkrym", "Hospitality", TV channels such as, "Neapol", radio "Leader", publisher "Tavnica".

Jim Thompson (USA)

During the time I have had the privilege to serve on the Executive Committee, I have initiated or assisted with many important programs that have helped to make FIJET stronger and create a vision for the future of FIJET.

These tasks included:

- Writing new Bylaws -- a project that gave structure to the running of FIJET and a new vision for its future
- Revitalizing, restructuring and reformatting of the FIJET newsletter and website over the past eight years. These two important tools have provided a vital line of communication for the membership and an important link to the fellow journalists and the international travel industry.
- As Director of FIJET Congresses & Events, I created presentation materials for potential Congress hosts and directed Congresses in China, Turkey and Romania.

In addition to my proven record of working for FIJET, I bring more than 40 years of experience as a journalist, editor and broadcaster.

If re-elected, my principle concerns will include expanding our membership by attracting both journalists and affiliate members, formalizing the procedures for selecting Congresses, re-establishing our affiliation with other journalist and tourism organizations and expanding FIJET into new countries.

Above all, I will continue to be open and responsive to the needs and concerns of all of the members.

I ask for your vote. I promise to be your voice on the Executive Committee and to continue to work on the behalf of all of the members of our great organization.

Georges Younes (Lebanon)

Tourism industry is considered among principal pillars of the Nation's Economy that has witnesses an outstanding expansion during the last century,, strengthened by the globalization, which hit the countries all over the world and make traveling smooth and systematic.

One of the major goals of the FIJET association is to spread touristic education.

Being devoted to the tourism and having acquired deep experience during my long career life in this economic sector that I would like to invest for the benefit of the association.

Therefore, I am presenting my candidature for the Executive Committee membership; knowing that my only concern is to exert extra efforts to enhance the role of the association in extending peace and sustainable tourism.



A First Nations Sense of Place

By Bob Fisher (*TravelJourno*, FIJET-North America)

It has often been said that Canadian literature, especially the novel, is distinguished by “a sense of place” which reflects in a very distinct way the historical and geographical realities of this nation.

In part, this is the result of Canada being a vast land of “regions” that are clearly demarcated by formidable topographical features — the mighty St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes (the largest freshwater inland waterway in the



world), the ancient mountains that form the Canadian Shield, the immense prairie lands to the west of Lake Superior, the daunting Rocky Mountains (themselves a major barrier to expansion), and the sub-arctic and arctic regions to the north. The “flow” of Canadian history from east to west was therefore fraught with many natural obstacles and many trials and tribulations.

As was the case in many other areas of the world, the evolution of Canada frequently involved a clash of cultures with its First Nations peoples whose indigenous sense of place often was at odds with that of the European newcomers.

In the North America of the 21st century — a society that is once again in the throes of rapid and powerful social change — it can be difficult to put one’s quite normal ethnocentric presumptions aside in order to fully understand and appreciate how the first peoples lived here for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, and the subsequent and frequent usurpation of land that ensues.

A visit to the Siksika Nation (the Blackfoot of Alberta) is a case study of an Aboriginal sense of place that differs in many ways from both the preconceived notions that many of the Europeans held before their arrival, and conceptually different from the European relationship to the land.

An encounter (however brief) with the Siksika Nation (and the Blackfoot Crossing National Historic Site) south-east of Calgary, will allow you a glimpse and a new appreciation of this distinct sense of place in part because the physical landscape will have a powerful sensory effect on you. And when you delve into the history and culture of the Siksika, you will discover that the sense of place is inextricably linked to a sense of time.

Because, as we often say, “we travel to discover the diversity of the human experience and in so doing, discover the commonality,” the gift that the Blackfoot will give you is an enhanced sense of both place and time — yours, theirs, and all others on this planet. A visit to the Siksika Nation is an experience in the dynamism and endurance of human culture.

A first look

The event was a community affair; we had been invited to attend the unofficial inauguration of the magnificent Siksika Nation-Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park Interpretive Centre. In many respects it was like an enormous family picnic during which a great deal of inter-generational bonding was going on.

On another level, it was a soft-spoken but triumphant celebration of thousands of years of Siksika history; a validation and reconfirmation of the soul of a people. It was a day for reconnecting through low-key speeches, exhibits, various cultural demonstrations and displays, a focus on eldership and storytelling, visits to the strategic moments in time nearby, and a traditional feast. But this first look was primarily for family and friends. The official VIP public inauguration would come later. This was a day on which the Siksika would quietly assume ownership once again of their heritage.

We had made our way to the Siksika Nation across very windy and rather damp grasslands. Dark theatrical clouds formed, reformed, and shifted across the vast prairie sky. On this day, nature seemed to be cautioning us to take care, and to be prepared to take shelter if necessary.

Turning south from the Transcanada Highway, we entered the Siksika Nation reservation and followed a road along which there were few of the usual indicators that mark the route being followed. And yet there was a subtle sense of direction as if the slightly rolling landscape was gently urging us onward. We went with the flow until up ahead there appeared an apparition, at an indeterminate distance. Initially it looked like sailing ships about to slip over the horizon. And then as we came closer, the lofty, tent-like structures defined themselves, and stood out starkly against the moody sky. I was



reminded of the approach to the great Gothic cathedral of Chartres across the pastoral countryside of rural France.

As we pulled into the parking lot, I was drawn to the sight of three traditional teepees standing self-assured on a low hill, somewhat of an anomaly itself in the flat prairie landscape we had just traversed. Behind them the Siksika had erected a long white dining tent of modern materials and design but with a sculptured look that provided a perfect contrasting background. This initial “visual” also established what would be a key theme for the day, the artful blend of time past and time present.



Looking back, looking forward

As we reached the top of the low-rising hill, we looked out over a magnificent landscape, one small part of the ancestral lands of the Siksika. The panoramic view is of the Blackfoot Crossing, a low-lying valley and wooded area that embraces the gently meandering Bow River.

This was also a transit area for Aboriginal hunters and their prey (primarily the great buffalo

herds) for thousands of years. Later it was a crucial crossing point for explorers as they began to open the West to the European newcomers.

Looking to our left, we saw for the first time, the new Interpretive Centre. Its design is a masterful combination of structural configurations and architectural themes that embody the traditional and the futuristic.

Facing westward over the valley, its prominence in the landscape is striking but not overwhelming. The symmetry of this state-of-the-art structure creates a very successful blend with the natural environment of the prairie that surrounds it, and the valley over which it presides.

There is a sense of vigilance inherent in the design and the placement of the Centre on the edge of the escarpment. The architects have skillfully interpreted the watchfulness and serenity of the environs; there is also a sense of the sacred in the building.

Visions, eco-awareness, and iconography

The Interpretive Centre is an architectural tour de force that personifies the Siksika culture and ethos. It is a conceptual building that also embodies in its physical structure the



ancient stories and metaphors of the nation it celebrates. It is a highly integrated structure that “flows,” following the patterns inherent in the landscape.

Not only does the new Centre look over an important historic site, it is also a window onto a unique environmental site; the largest prairie

riparian (riverbank) ecosystem still in existence on the planet. Riparian environmental zones are important because of their role in soil conservation, bio-diversity, and for their life-sustaining qualities.

The Centre is also a complex iconic structure, a testament to the Aboriginal way of life in which the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things are understood on a profound (often non-verbal) level.

Like any creative endeavour, the creators of this Centre took risks. In striving for excellence one may just miss the mark and the end-product may actually diminish the impact of the intended message. This is not the case with the Blackfoot Crossing Interpretive Centre. In integrating the theme and metaphor of the teepee in the design of the Centre, the architects (and the Siksika elders who advised them and contributed their inherited wisdom) did indeed risk creating an imitation of a cultural and geographical heritage. However, because the process was a truly shared experience, what they have produced is true to the Siksika consciousness, and at the same time innovative. The building is a living metaphor for the natural balance that is at the core of the Siksika belief system; and it is also successful in leaving a soft footprint on the land.

The approach to the Centre up an S-curved lane sets the tone of following the landscape. To the left of the entranceway are a series of Buffalo rub rocks, highly polished boulders that bison over the millennia have used to rub against in an attempt to remove mosquitoes and other insects. These rub rocks are in a way touchstones to the past when the great herds of bison roamed these grasslands, and were hunted by the forbears of the Siksika and other nations. The bison that is part of the coat of arms of the Siksika is

representative of this animal which is sacred to them given that it sustained their ancestors in many ways.

The overall spoke-like design of the building also is a link to the past, and representative of the medicine wheels; large stone circles still found throughout Alberta which confirm the existence of some of the earliest peoples on the Great Plains of North America.

As you explore the Centre, you do so gradually as if you were being led by spirits. Approaching it from the East entrance (protected from the prevailing westerly winds) you also see how the roof of the building incorporates and repeats the theme of the teepee, seven sacred tepees in fact. It is not difficult to imagine the Centre from “a bird’s eye view”; the planned and fortuitous positioning of the building takes into account all points of reference in this prairie environment.

You enter the Centre under a feature that I particularly admired, a luminous coloured glass eagle feather fan. The eagle is of course sacred to the Siksika; and this luminosity is a central motif in the Centre as you immediately realize on entering. The seven sacred teepees on the roof are also skylights; and they are also connected to a central teepee “Sundance Arbour” which allows the prairie light to permeate the structure. The enormous windows that look out to the west are covered with an energy-efficient reflective gold and blue glass curtain. In telescope-fashion, the great wall of glass brings the panorama to the viewer. If you were an eagle, this would be the place from which you would launch yourself and soar over the landscape, confident and free.



When you are standing in the Amphitheatre of the Centre, if you look down you will notice that the floor is decorated in a sunburst pattern. Looking up, you see a network of cantilevered sundance poles that (like a traditional teepee) provide the essential structure

that places you in close proximity to the land. This is a building in which vision and perception are enhanced through natural methods.

From the valley below, and from the prairie land beyond, the building seems to beckon. Nestled into the grassy hilltop, the overall curved shape suggests a bird of prey that has touched down with its wings still extended catching the cool updraft from the valley floor. In both of the pre-cast “wings” of the building are embedded a series windows in the form of segmented arrows, symbolic of the life force that is central to the Siksika ethos.

The central theme of the teepee with the gigantic solid metal “lodge poles” is what gives the building its lofty appearance and reinforces the openness to the sky and to the life forces that are so prevalent in the Aboriginal worldview. Looking at the Centre from the Blackfoot Crossing and Treaty flats, and with your back to the imminent setting sun, you realize how this structure also suggests a sense of direction, both literally and poetically.

The Dream

When a member of the Siksika creates his or her own teepee, it is painted with symbols and images that come to the individual in the form of a vision or a dream. This new Centre is part of a visionary 21st-century dream of creating a place where travellers can come from all over the world to learn about the great stories this land has to tell. It is also, of course, a new and dramatic focal point for the members of the Siksika Nation.

But the Centre and the Blackfoot Historical Crossing Heritage Park are also part of a strategic business plan on the part of the Siksika. This is a travel and tourism initiative that will attract travellers from all over the world, especially those who value the kind of historical-cultural travel that informs and enlightens.

And this Centre will be the entry point, for non-Aboriginal people especially, into a history that pre-dates that on which people of European descent often base their frame of reference.

Timelessness

On September 22, 1877, Chief Crowfoot of the Siksika Nation (along with others) signed a treaty with “Her Majesty the Queen,” a treaty whose provisions and stipulations were to last “as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the water flows.”

History, however, is a complex and problematic process. And in terms of the First Nations peoples of Canada — or of all of North America for that matter — the adage “Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter” applies in a rather roundabout way.

Explaining the complexities of the history of Canada’s First Nations and their relationships with the European colonial powers is a daunting and constantly ongoing task. There are few simple answers. There is however a need to recognize the role that perception and

misperception, cross-cultural conflicts, and ethnocentric bias have played in the telling of this history.

The Siksika Nation has approximately 6000 members and is part of the much larger Blackfoot Confederacy whose ancestral lands (approximately 113,000 square kilometres) once spread over most of southern Alberta and into what today is Montana. Their history adds 10,000 years onto what is usually considered the span of Canadian history.



Like most First Nations people in North America, they were initially called “Indians,” an error usually attributed to Christopher Columbus. Ironically, in Canada that incorrect descriptor has been institutionalized as a legal term, especially in “The Indian Act,” the Canadian federal statute that defines the rights and privileges of one of Canada’s three Aboriginal peoples.

The equally complex history of the struggle between the competing imperial powers of France and Britain for control over Canada (primarily for access to the lucrative fur trade) led to a myriad of events that in turn eventually led to a frequently discordant legal relationship between First Nations people and the colonial powers.

When France conceded defeat to Britain and gained control over “New France,” Britain of course gained great potential wealth and power, but it was also left with a great many issues to deal with; as every colonial-imperialistic power faces when it occupies land. Foremost among the challenges of colonialism of course is what to do with the indigenous people who are already there.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763

This is what faced King George III when he issued [The Royal Proclamation of 1763](#).

The “Crown’s” purpose was to create an organizational structure in the vast new North American empire Britain was left with. Stability of course was key, and to this end the Proclamation also focussed on relations with the First Peoples Nations by regulating trade, and making land settlements and purchases on Canada’s western frontier.

And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds.

And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in purchasing Lands of the Indians, to the great Prejudice of our Interests, and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said Indians; In order, therefore, to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the end that the Indians may be convinced of our Justice and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of our Privy Council strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any purchase from the said Indians of any Lands reserved to the said Indians, within those parts of our Colonies where, We have thought proper to allow Settlement...

What was embarked upon — and this was certainly not new throughout the world — was a long constitutional-legislative and moral endeavour to do “the right thing.” However the schism of perception over what that right thing was and how it was enacted, is what makes the analysis of the historical events exceedingly difficult.

Eventually treaties would be negotiated with First Nations peoples, the most important being what is known as the Numbered Treaties under which the First Nations peoples surrendered parts of their land in return for direct payments and other promises on the part of the Crown.

The Siksika, for example, along with other nations in this part of what would eventually be Canada, negotiated Treaty 7 (with a Queen this time), which many historians consider one of the most important of them all. And it was the legendary [Chief Crowfoot](#) who acted on behalf of the Siksika Nation.

And Whereas the said Indians have been informed by Her Majesty’s Commissioners that it is the desire of Her Majesty to open up for settlement, and such other purposes as to Her Majesty may seem meet, a tract of country, bounded and described as hereinafter mentioned, and to obtain the consent thereto of Her Indian subjects inhabiting the said tract, and to make a Treaty, and arrange with them, so that there may be peace and good will between them and Her Majesty and between them and Her Majesty’s other subjects....

And the undersigned Blackfeet, Blood, Peigan and Sarcee Head Chiefs and Minor Chiefs, and Stoney Chiefs and Councillors, on their own behalf and on behalf of all other Indians inhabiting the Tract within ceded, do hereby solemnly promise and engage to

strictly observe this Treaty, and also to conduct and behave themselves as good and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen....

A defining moment in Canadian history

Treaty 7 is considered one of the most “defining” of the treaties in that it played a crucial role in uniting Canada. Because of Canada’s unique geography and the constant fears of expansion northward on the part of the great new republic to the south, the newly formed government of Canada knew it had to acquire full control over the vast lands to the west, then known as Rupert’s Land. The only way to do this was to build a transcontinental railroad. Such a railroad would complete the east-west link, a political unification strategy that took into account the great inland waterway of the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes, which stops of course at the western end of Lake Superior. (This is known as the Laurentian School/theory of Canadian history.)

A railroad across the prairies and then through the largest obstacle of all — the Rocky Mountains — became therefore the “national dream” of Canada’s first prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald. Such a railroad, however, was also crucial because it was the key



“bargaining chip” for bringing British Columbia into Canadian Confederation, which it did in 1870.

Because “Indian lands” were under control of the federal government — as stipulated in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 — the government in Ottawa therefore

had to deal with the aboriginal people whose land stood between the onward thrust of the railroad: over 80,000 square kilometres. And a large part of this land was the ancestral homeland of the Siksika Nation. The treaty that allowed the transcontinental railroad to go ahead, and completed the east-west unification of Canada, was Treaty 7. And as you stand looking out the windows of the Interpretive Centre, you can see Blackfoot Crossing, the exact spot on which that treaty was signed.

In part, the universal issue in and the challenge of interpreting these agreements after-the-fact is to arrive at a real understanding of how two significantly different cultures

interpreted them. Were these just real estate deals? What was the spirit and the intent of each party in the negotiations? Were both parties operating fully as equals in the negotiations? As Antoine de St.-Éxupéry has said, “Language is the source of all misunderstanding.” And when different cultures meet, there are many levels of language (spoken, unspoken, assumed) that may not have been fully expressed nor understood.

Promises kept, promises broken?

In one document I obtained from the Siksika, there is the statement, “Siksika has a rich culture that has been eroded and overrun by a eurocentric view of the Aboriginal role in the development of Canada. Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park will help revive our noble heritage and will add a new dimension to Canadian history. This is our gift to you, an expression of the partnership understood when our ancestors signed Treaty 7.”

As we have seen time and time again throughout the world, when cultures clash or collide, someone always loses, someone always gains, and someone has another’s worldview imposed on them.

Like most indigenous people, the Siksika have invested a great deal of trust in their oral history, a record that has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. In a European cultural mode, the oral history is often less validated than the written record, and yet written records date back only so far.

The culture of story-telling

Cultures like the Siksika are also storytelling cultures, however these stories are not just imagined nor invented accounts of what came before; for the Siksika they represent a legitimate recorded history.

The Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park Interpretive Centre is a collection of stories. And while there is much tangible evidence of the long-term shared knowledge, wisdom, and art of these people to be found in the Centre, the non-Aboriginal visitor would do well to bear in mind the intricate narrative that the Centre and the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park communicates on many levels, through many layers, and in many ancient forms of “media.” This is grand theatre with all that such historic dramas imply: impressive settings, dynamic characters and characterization, complex plot lines, crises, and a dénouement.

This New Interpretive Centre is also indicative of the Siksika’s ability to blend the past and the present. The planning of the Centre was begun over 25 years ago when a small group of elders had a dream for their people. They knew that they needed to keep the stories alive, and they envisioned doing so through a new medium — travel and tourism.

Like most Aboriginal people, the Siksika know that experiential learning is the most direct and effective method of gathering and communicating information; and shaping attitudes. And travel is the most experiential form of learning.

I am confident that what the Siksika Nation's new Heritage Centre will achieve is a new level of dialogue between the Siksika and the visitors they welcome to this wonderful site.

"...What is life? It is the flash of a firefly on a summer night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the winter time. It is the shadow that runs across the grass, and is lost in the sunlight." — Chief Crowfoot of the Siksika Nation (1890)

For more information

[The Siksika Nation, Blackfoot Crossing, and Interpretive Centre](#)

[A "fly-through" virtual visit](#) to the Blackfoot Historical Crossing Interpretive Centre

[Chief Crowfoot and Treaty 7](#)

["Ottawa Apologizes to Natives"](#) (A *Maclean's* magazine article about native residential schools)

[Canada's First Nations](#) (from the University of Calgary website)

[Travel Alberta](#)

[The Glenbow Museum](#) in Calgary and its permanent exhibition on Aboriginal people

