



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 – January, 2012



Drava Bridge in Maribor, Slovenia, site of the 2012 FIJET Young Journalists Academy

“Your travel life has the aspect of a dream. It is something outside the normal, yet you are in it. It is peopled with characters you have never seen before and in all probability will never see again. It brings occasional homesickness, and loneliness, and pangs of longing... But you are like the Vikings who have gone into a world of adventure, and home is not home until you return.”

– Agatha Christie

Important Information

March 5, 2012 – Final day for submitting intension to run for office in the FIJET Elections

March 31, 2012 – Deadline for submitting articles and stories from the 53rd FIJET World Congress in Romania. Do not miss this deadline or you will NOT be allowed to attend the upcoming Congress in Egypt and you could be expelled from FIJET.

Contents:

From the Editor's Desk – Will the world end before FIJET? Jim ponders this question and other world shaking issues, including the 2012 World Congress, the Young Journalists Program and the upcoming elections for the Executive Committee.

FIJET News – FIJET at FITUR; the latest on the FIJET 2012 World Congress in Egypt; FIJET Board of Directors to be held in the Czech Republic in March; the 2012 Young Journalists Academy to be held in Maribor; a report on the Golden Apple ceremony in Sicily; an invitation to the Global Media Forum; an invitation to join the European Journalists 50th Congress; Rules governing requirements for publishing following a Congress or meeting.

News From Around FIJET – A report on the gala year-end party in Tunisia; a Interview about England's Prince Charles visiting Romania.

Special Report – Columnist Bob Fisher (*TravelJourno*, FIJET-North America) writes about Brother Andre and Quebec's rich Catholic heritage.

Editor:

Jim Thompson (jim@traveljournos.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-web.com>) .



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

2012: The End or the Beginning?



2012. Will it be the end for us all? Some believe that the **world will cease to exist on December 21, 2012**. That's the date the Mayan Calendar ends and with it – so goes the theory – all of us.

Tales of the apocalypse in 2012 abound with doomsday scenarios ranging from a **mysterious planet that will smash into Earth** and a **catastrophic solar storm to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes**.

While I would love to use this as an excuse to chuck it all (yes, even stop writing this newsletter every damn month!), **run off to the islands and indulge in all the debauched fantasies that my brain can conjure**, it looks like I may have to wait a while – quite a while! – before I get the chance.

To paraphrase the late Mark Twain, “the reports of our death are greatly exaggerated.” Despite doomsday theories, Internet rumors and Hollywood plot lines, NASA scientists confirm that **the world will not end on December 21, 2012**. In fact, they say, the world will last another **500 million years!**

Since we have plenty of time, 2012 will be a time for a **new beginning for FIJET**. We have already started things off with the presentation of the **Golden Apple in Sicily this month**. The ceremony on January 15 saw the coveted award presented to the **city of Caltagirone** in a very special ceremony on the famous ** steps of the city. A full report of the ceremony can be found in this edition of the newsletter.

Also on the 2012 (end-of-the-world) agenda are the **FIJET elections** for President and the Executive Committee. Details of the elections and candidacy form have been sent out by the Elections Sub-Committee to the Board of Directors. The deadline for filing intension to run for office is **February 15**.



I strongly encourage as many candidates for office as possible. This is **your time to step up and return something to FIJET**. But, don't be fooled. Serving as a member of the Executive Committee is **not easy**. If you take the office seriously, it means many, many hours of **work**, lots of **disappointments** and even more **compromises**. Since we are all volunteers, it also means **no compensation** for your time and effort. On the plus side, you will have the compensation of

know that you are **servicing your fellow journalists** and **giving something to the future generations of our profession.**

There are many, many issues facing FIJET and we need a **strong group of dedicated people** to sit on the Executive Committee that is dedicated to the future of FIJET who can take us into the future. I encourage you to talk to your Association and **consider becoming a candidate.**

Full discussions of the procedures for the election will be held during the **Board of Directors meeting in the Czech Republic** in March. The Board will also address wide range of topic including new memberships, the **FIJET Member Directory**, the **Young Journalists Academy** in Slovenia and **upcoming Congresses**. It promises to be an important series of meetings that will help set the course for FIJET for the coming year.



The **Young Journalists Academy for 2012** is set to be held in the city of Maribor, Slovenia from June 1-8. This year's theme will be **"Culture & Sustainable Tourism."** In addition to lectures and workshops, delegates will have the opportunity to visit the nearby Austrian city of Graz, the European Capital of Culture in the year 2003.

According to **Academy Director Drago Bulc**, "as the Academy is always an "edu-tainment" event participants will have the possibility to visit different cultural events and performances as well as tourist and cultural attractions in Maribor and its surroundings."

He added. "all national organizations and individual members are requested to start collecting candidates e.g. applications for the Academy 2012, especially from those countries whose citizens need visa to enter Slovenia. Should the application be received on time we guarantee for the first 20 registered participant visa for Slovenia e.g. the Schengen visa."



Also on the calendar for 2012 is the **FIJET World Congress**. As noted in the FIJET News section of this newsletter, discussions are continuing concerning details of the Congress. It is hoped that final decisions will be made during the Board of Directors meeting in March.

This year we also plan to finally issue a new copy of the **FIJET Member Directory**. As I have said many times in the past, the **key to this is to have ALL members register** on the FIJET website. This year we will get serious about this point. **Unless you are registered** as a member on the FIJET website, **you will NOT be considered as a member of FIJET** and you will have no right or privileges. The payment of dues does not automatically make you a member. Assuming that we can get everyone to register, then we will have a Member Directory this year.

Indeed, 2012 promises to be a wonderful year with many new and exciting meetings and events on the schedule.

Before I sign off for this month, I want to **send my sincere thanks to everyone who took the time to send me good wishes** for the holidays and for the New Year. Thank you for your warm wishes, for your friendship and for your loyalty to FIJET.

Happy New Year to everyone!

Jim Thompson
FIJET Executive Committee
Director of FIJET Congresses & Meetings

FIJET NEWS



TU ENCUENTRO

FIJET at FITUR – By a special arrangement with FITUR, FIJET Vice President, Miguel Angel Garcia Brera, arranged for a booth at FITUR – one of the largest Travel & Tourism Fairs in the world. The booth was a meeting place for our members and a place to meet others. Thnsk goes to Vice President Garcia Brera for making this arrangement.

2012 Congress in Egypt – Discussions are still underway for the 2012 FIJET World Congress in Egypt. Executive Committee member, Salah Attia, is working on the program that is schedule for October, 2012. Some members have expressed concern about the political situation in Egypt. Salah has assured us that he is closely monitoring the situation. A full discussion of the situation will be made during the Board of Directors meeting in the Czech Republic in March.

Board Meeting in the Czech Republic – The first meeting of the FIJET Board of Directors is currently scheduled to take place in the Czech Republic in March. Miroslav Navara (FIJET-Czech Republic and former member of the FIJET Executive Committee) is working on the final program which will be sent to the Board members via email as soon as it is available.



GOLDEN APPLE IN SICILY

By Jacques Campe

A nine member delegation of FIJET Members visited Sicily (January 14-16) to present our famous trophy to Professor Franco PIGNATARO and Alessandra PALMISCIANO, Mayor and Vice-Mayor of the city of Caltagirone.

Listed on UNESCO's World Heritage sites, Caltagirone is a city of 20,000 inhabitants in central south-eastern Sicily, 80 km southwest of Catania, famous for its ETNA volcano, 3,340 m at its highest point and the most active in Europe.

The location of Sicily in the central Mediterranean Sea close to the continent made it an easy prey for invaders from all points of the compass : Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Swabians, Genoans, Catalans, Spaniards, French, all occupied part of or the whole territory at some point in history. It was eventually liberated by Garibaldi in 1860 and became part of the unified Kingdom of Italy on March 17, 1861. The 150th anniversary of the country was celebrated last year.

Caltagirone remained Arab and Muslim for a long time after the Norman conquest (1061-1091). Another particularity of its history was the long presence of Genoans succeeded by Catalans. The area was also the home of numerous Jews who were expelled from all Spanish possessions in 1493 at the behest of Ferdinand and Isabel of Castille, the then Spanish monarchs.

The art of working with clay has been a local tradition for 4000 years and the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries saw the golden age of the "town of ceramics."

Nowadays it is still the main activity of Caltagirone and several hundreds of craftsmen perpetuate the tradition, drawing crowds from Italy and beyond who rush to buy their production in their well-stocked boutiques.



The city has a beautiful cathedral, numerous churches, palaces, villas and a richly endowed Museum of Ceramics (what else?). The Casa Senatoria houses a temporary exhibition commemorating the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy : local artists have designed heads in ceramics representing each of the 20 regions of the country.



The main attraction is the 142 steps of the monumental staircase linking the New and the Old Towns leading to the church of Santa Maria del Monte at the top. Each riser is richly paved with ceramic tiles, all of different designs.

It is on the staircase that the Golden Apple was handed to the authorities, followed by a cocktail party and a press conference at City Hall.

We later visited the winery of Antica Tenuta del Nanfro for a wine-tasting

session before being entertained at home for dinner by the Bugliari and La Rocca families who fed us some of the best typical dishes of their region. Participants stayed at the Villa San Mauro Hotel, the best in town.

The last day took us 25 km from Caltagirone to the hilltop town of Piazza Armerina. Apart from its picturesque location, it is a truly unique place : it was the only one in the whole area never to have been hit by an earthquake. Some people call it a miracle, but it is in fact due to the geological structure of its subsoil. Local people speak a French-based dialect, courtesy of the Norman occupying forces and nobody else in Sicily can understand them!

Before visiting the town, we drove 5 km to the Villa Romana del Casale, another World Heritage site. The former Roman villa, spread over 4000 sq meters and laid out in a series of connecting rooms, was built in the 4th century A.D. for an unknown Roman Senator. It contains a stunning array of mosaic floors, some of them depicting scenes of an incredible modernity, such as the famous “girls in bikini.”

We then went to the Diocesan Museum where a local food producer had organized a tasting session of its goodies, before moving to the newly inaugurated art gallery.

Fausto Carmelo NIGRELLI, the Mayor, then welcomed us at the Town Hall and told us about his town and we familiarised him with FIJET.

The final lunch was served at a magnificent country estate called GIGLIOTTO : apart from serving delicious food, it is also a winery and guest-house with 16 beautifully appointed rooms.

Our heartfelt thanks and congratulations go to the organizers of this memorable trip and all the wonderful people who treated us like royalty.



2012 Young Journalists Academy Set for June – With a theme of “Culture & Sustainable Tourism,” the 2012 Young Journalists Academy will be held in Maribor, Slovenia from June 1-8, 2012.

According to Drago Bulc, Director of the FIJET Academy for Young Travel Journalists, “the Board of the Academy for Young Travel Journalists, in cooperation with FIJET, will hold the third Academy for Young Travel Journalists in Maribor, the second largest town in the Republic of Slovenia and the city designated as the “European Capital of Culture of 2012.”

“Situation on the banks of the River Drava on the outskirts of the Alps, the wine growing hills of Maribor, which connects the four European countries of Italy, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia,



sweeps gently down to the Pannonia Plain. The city boasts the 400 year old vine, which is officially recognized as the Oldest Vine in the world by the Guinness Book of World Records.

“Included in the program will be a visit to the nearby Austrian city of Graz, the European Capital of Culture in the year 2003. As the Academy is always an “edu-tainment” event participants will have the possibility to visit different cultural events and performances as well as tourist and cultural attractions in Maribor

and its surroundings.”

During a meeting between Drago Bulc and Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization UNWTO, Mr. Rifai confirmed the interest of UNWTO to support the Academy. Details of this cooperation will be coordinated by Marcelo Risi, Principal Media Officer UNWTO, who was also one of the speakers at the second Academy earlier this year in Portorož.

The detailed program is expected in the coming weeks. All national organizations and individual members are requested to start collecting candidates e.g. applications for the Academy 2012, especially from those countries whose citizens need a visa to enter Slovenia.

“Should the application be received on time we guarantee for the first 20 registered participants a visa for Slovenia e.g. the Schengen visa,” said Drago.

FIJET Elections – Election for FIJET President and for the Executive Committee will be held this year. All National Associations are encouraged to have a candidate (only one candidate per Association is allowed). In order to be considered valid Associations are allowed to have a candidate, National Associations must have paid the dues for all of their members by March 31, 2012 and all of their members must be registered in the FIJET website. Any association which does not pay dues or which does not have at least 10 registered members will not be considered valid and will not be allowed to have a candidate.

Global Media Forum Invitation – Hendrik Schott (FIJET-Germany) reports that Deutsche Welle (Germany's international broadcaster) will organize the fifth edition of the Global Media Forum in June, 2012.

Hendrik can offer sponsorships (which should include airfares and accommodations) to the event for a limited number of journalists. You are asked to send an email to Jim Thompson (jim@traveljournos.com) if you are interested in participating. Please understand that there are a limited number of spaces. Candidates will be notified if they are selected.

The topic of next year's conference will be "Culture. Education. Media." Cultural diversity and the UNESCO world heritage will also play an important role. Among the events will be a workshop organized by the UNWTO and a keynote address by the head of the UNWTO.

More information is available at: www.dw-gmf.de.

FIJET Members invited to the European Journalists 50th Congress –Our colleague Hendrik Schott (FIJET-Germany) notes that “some spaces are available to FIJET members at the European Journalists (EJ) 50th Congress which will be held in Razlog, Bulgaria from September 20-23, 2012.



The schedule of events is attached. If you are interested, you should contact Paolo Magagnotti, EJ President or EJ Secretary General Raluca Nelepcu (nelepcu@adz.ro Mobile: +40 726 319 746).

You can also contact Sofia Vassil Sotirov for information regarding Bulgaria and the area where the congress will take place. Vassil Sotirov's e-mail and mobile: vsotirov@yahoo.com - +359 885 840 487

Mr. Magagnotti notes that, “Since it will be a special event because the Congress will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the EJ foundation, and because in the Country club when we will be staying the number of rooms for us will be limited, we need to have a pre-registration by December 20, 2011 and definitive confirmation by February 29.”

The participation fee is: 200 (two hundred)-Euros for a person in a single room and 350 (three hundred fifty)-Euros for two persons in a double room.

The participation fee includes:

1. participation in all Congress events
2. transportation from airport to the Club and back
3. three nights in five stars hotel or apartment, including breakfast
4. three dinners
5. two lunches
6. visits and excursions

50th EJ Congress

Razlog, "Pirin Golf & Country Club"

The Future of the European Union

Socio-economic Development in the Balkans

Thursday, September 20, 2012

Arrival day

- 9:00 pm: Welcome dinner at the Country Club (near Razlog)



Friday, September 21, 2012

Morning: The Future of the European Union

First part

- Opening of the Congress
- Welcome addresses by local authorities and representatives of the Bulgarian Government

Second part

- Round table with politicians, journalists and businessmen.

Lunch

- Visit to the worldwide famous Rila Monastery
- Dinner in the wood with torches

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Morning: Socio-economic Development in the Balkans

First part

- Speakers:
 - Sergio Arzeni: Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Local Development of the OECD, Paris.
 - Manfred Swarovski: Swarovski Chrystal; Founder and CEO of SWACO.
 - Jordan Kanazirev: Director, BALKANSTROY
 - Other Speakers TBA

Second part

- Round table with politicians, journalists and entrepreneurs.

Lunch

- Visits to be organized
- Dinner in Club's restaurants

Sunday, September 23, 2012

- Departure day



Pre-registration by December 20, 2011.

Registration confirmation must be received by February 29.

CONGRESS & MEETING PRODUCTION CRITERIA & RULES

CRITERIA FOR ATTENDING A CONGRESS

7. Any member whose membership dues are not paid by March 31 of the year of the Congress will not be allowed to attend the Congress.
8. New members may not attend a Congress in the first year of their membership.
9. Members who have not attended a Congress in the previous three years are required to present proof of their continuing activity as a journalist before being allowed to register for the Congress.
10. Anyone not sending in at least one qualifying published article, broadcast or photo credit, following a Congress or event will not be allowed to attend the next Congress or event and will be required to provide proof (audit) of their work as a professional travel journalist, writer, broadcaster or photographer over the previous year before they are allowed to attend any future Congress or event.
11. Congress quotas (if set) will apply to each country and not to each association.

PRODUCTION CRITERIA & RULES

(Note: All requested information must be provided in English)

1. All journalists members of FIJET attending a Congress, no matter their registration status, must write and publish at least one article following the Congress and prior to the deadline set for publishing. Articles published prior to the Congress are not acceptable.
2. Copies of articles and broadcasts must be sent to the Secretary General prior to the announced deadline. Since the deadline is usually six months following a Congress (exact date will be published prior to the Congress), unless a special exemption has been granted, no excuses will be accepted for failing to publish.
3. If there are extraordinary circumstances that prevent a member from meeting the stated deadline, a special exemption (which may or may not be granted) must be requested prior to the deadline for publication.
4. Acceptable articles **MUST** be published in a magazine, newspaper or recognized website. An article that is simply typed in a word processor is **NOT** acceptable. Articles published only in association newsletters will also not be accepted. Information posted to free Internet sites such as Facebook or YouTube along with blogs and blog sites are not acceptable to meet the publishing requirements.
5. When sending copies of articles and broadcasts, you must provide the entire publication (in the case of printed materials) and program portions that aired before and after (in the case of a broadcast). For print publications, this means the entire magazine or newspaper section.
6. Members registered as photographers, must provide copies of articles containing their photos (in the format stated in item 5 above). The photos must contain a photo credit with the name of the photographer or it will not be accepted. A CD that contains only photos is not acceptable.
7. All articles must contain the name of the person writing the article in order to be accepted. If you write under a pen name, you must provide us with that name prior to registering for the Congress.
8. No more than four people per publication will be allowed to attend a Congress in the name of that publication.

9. Only recognized and established websites will be acceptable for proof of publication. Those writing for websites must provide (in English) information about the site, including circulation figures, year site was established and information about the prime audience.

10. All articles, broadcasts and photos must be accompanied by the following information in English:

Title of Article

Name of Author

Citizenship of Author

Name of Media

Page number in the media or date and time of broadcast

Country of Media

Circulation of Media

Information on where publication is distributed

Date (month, year) article published or broadcast

NEWS FROM AROUND FIJET

New Year's Eve Under Tunisian Skies

By Jacques Campe

Following the traditional yearly invitation of our President, Tijani Haddad, a group of 20 FIJET members and their spouses from Belgium, France, Turkey and Croatia gathered at the Marina Palace Hotel in Yasmine Hammamet Dec 29-Jan 2, 2012.

The event is always expected with great interest, providing a unique opportunity to enjoy traditional Tunisian hospitality and discover some of the main places of interest in the area.



The first day took us to Tunis with all participants eager to see its new appearance after the Jasmine Revolution of 2011. At first sight, the main change is the disappearance of the formerly ubiquitous pictures of ex-President Ben Ali parading everywhere in offices, buildings, stores and down to the smallest newspaper and tobacco stands.

The Clock Tower square, once called Place du 7 Novembre 1987 (date when Ben Ali proclaimed himself President after chasing the former ailing President Bourguiba), now bears the name of Place du 16 Janvier 2011, the day after he fled the country.

A walk took us along the main thorough-fare (avenue Habib Bourguiba, aka the Champs-Elysées of Tunis) to the narrow winding alleys of the Medina (Old Town) dotted with stalls selling everything you can imagine.



We then proceeded to the nice country house of our President to enjoy a gorgeous and lavish barbecue surrounded by almond and olive trees. To finish this memorable day, we visited the excavations of the ancient city of Oudhna (ex Uthina), dominated by its Capitol overlooking the amphitheatre. The city still contains the ruins of numerous villas, once adorned with stunning mosaics now on show at the Bardo Museum in the capital.

The next day took us to Kairouan, the main Holy City in Western North Africa (Maghreb) and the fourth in the world after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Its Great Mosque is one of the four or five most beautiful monuments of the Muslim world.

We then proceeded to Monastir to visit the Mausoleum of the Bourguiba Family (first President of independent Tunisia, who ruled from 1956 until 1987 and died in 2000).

Our last stop was in Sousse (3rd largest city) for some shopping before returning to the hotel for the usual magnificent New Year's Eve dinner at the sound of local music.

Finally, on the first day of the new year, we went to the Medina (Old Town) of Hammamet and Nabeul, capital of Tunisian pottery.

All in all a superb trip enjoyed by all participants who are all looking forward to repeating the experience at the end of 2012.

“Romania Forever” – An Unique Trophy for The Prince Charles

His Royal Highness, Prince Charles of Great Britain, will visit Romania in the coming months. His visit following the FIJET World Congress in Romania in 2011 and is yet another expression of how this country is beginning to take on an important role in world tourism.

PressTour President, Victor Radulecu (FIJET-Romania) provided us with a very special interview with Jeremy Stanifo, High Representative for Sustainable Development, who provided his insights into Prince Charles' relationship with Romania and Romanian Tourism.



You were in Romania several times, representing His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall. What is the purpose of your visits in Romania?

There is an agreement between His Royal Highness and the Government of Romania, to provide a secretariat for Sustainable Development in the Prime Minister's office and the agreement is that



His Royal Highness pays for me to come here and the Gouvernement pays for me when I am here and also, they are about to give me some staff to increase the activity of the secretariat, looking of all aspects of Sustainable Development, especially in the Carpathians.

How would you describe this agreement?

Both the agreement and collaboration are very good, but it takes time to have an impact, when we are talking about the new ideas for Romania, enviromentle, sustainability, preservation of local

cultural rutes and so on. I am not here to tell, but to act as a catalyst between the organizations already working here, the Romanian Gouverment, and also people working in the villages, in the towns, like “Mihai Eminescu Trust”, for example.

You think MET is a very succesfull organization in Romania?

There have been indeed, many succeses, but slow ones. We have to work with small steps. What is interesting here, is that I don't bring money, but I am here to help facilitate the release of money and to identify possible sources of money to invest in projects.

So I met various people and we had some succeses in finding money to do small projects, but the most important thing is to find the transfer of ideas about enviromentle sustainable work here in Romania, and much of it is already happened. I have discovered also, that people and organizations are working in small compartiments and sometimes they don't communicate enough to eachother and this is a very common fact. Someone from Baia Mare, who's working on a project focused on enviroment, can exchange ideas with someone from Brasov, for example, who's working on a similar project. This it doesn't involve competition.

Do you think that the development of incoming will mean more money for the Sustainable Development?

Definitely yes! The view of the secretariat is that tourism is the essential part of a cycle of rural activity. Without tourism, there will be very little money going into the rural areas and without that money, those rural people will not stay in the rural areas anymore and if they don't stay in the rural areas, they don't keep animals and live stock, which makes the beautiful landscape in this country. So, they are all linked together: the landscape, the people and tourism and of course, in the middle of all that, you have your



gastro-tourism, your cultural events, your whole way of living in Romania, your history and your future.

So, tourism is a target for the development of the area. Development for tourism.



Yes, but it has to be done sensitively. I, personally have not been to Bran, but I understand that sometimes the tourism is a bit fierce. I can't really comment, because I haven't been there, but I think there are some people who are very nervous about introducing tourism, just for tourism. You have indeed the possibility to build big hotels, to import all your food for the hotels, to adopt modern technics, but really, what it should be searched is to stimulate

the local economy. The culture is part of the way of life and the way of life is using the land and products from the land and you have some fantastic products and wine in the country. Even the romanian tourists, whom are going into the rural areas, even they like to see and enjoy rural products. You have natural food, organic food and easy food at the same time, so, I think you should focus more on the ecological food.

Are these the motivations for His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales to come to Romania?

His Royas Highness comes here because he finds it so beautiful. He loves to be part of nature, he loves to see how nature works and he enjoys all those local products and that is way the place where he stays is deep into the countryside.

The movie in which His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales appears was his initiative, or the channel's one?

It was a combination of ideas. The prince doesn't very often give interviews and we were very pleased that he gave this interview, because, for the first time, he managed to give in a public way his views about the beautiful Romania, or the Carpathian Garden, as you call it.

After that, he invited to England our Minister of Tourism, Mrs. Elena Udrea. His motivation was the same?

Yes, he was very interested to meet Mrs. Udrea, to discuss the way tourism is developing here. I'm working closely with her ministry on some projects that she's developing for all Romania, Herculane, Borsec and Sulina. I am working with her ministry on that, with the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), which covers all Romania.

His Royal Highness is involved with the Carpathians, but he's very keen to visit the coasts also. I think because his father, Prince Philip went to Constanta sometime. He would also love to see the Delta at some stage, when his program will allow that.

Our association, PressTour FIJET Romania will have in 2012 the second edition of it's Gala Awards and on this occasion we would be honored to award the Prince of Wales with an unique and special trophy, "Romania Forever", for his extraordinary intervention in the recognition of Romania's beautiful landscapes and cultural traditions. Do you think he will agree?

I am sure the Prince will be delighted to receive this award, because he cares passionately about Romania, but if he will be able to participate in the ceremony associated with the award giving, that's a question I will not be able to answer this moment. We will see...

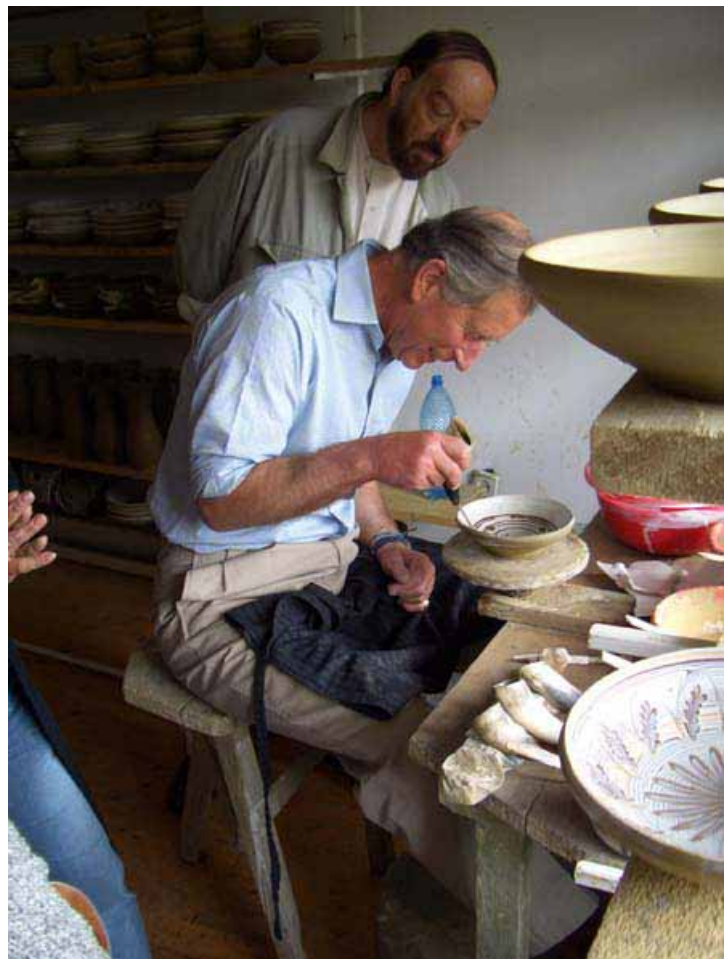
Can you please make some judgements about the romanian tourism, for the tourism press?

I am delighted to see that not only foreign tourists come to Romania, but romanian as well are escaping from the city, in favor of rural areas. You have a fantastic history here, much longer and significant than in other countries in Europe.

What do you appreciate it's not good in our tourism, or in our activity in tourism?

The overall activity in tourism is good. I think, looking on this as an outsider, as a foreigner, there is sometimes too much focus on modern aspects. People are putting thermopans and so many modern developments to their pensions, so that apparently, the cultural background seems destroyed. They should improve their knowledge about what their target audience is. I am delighted to see that you have this international perspective with FIJET, because it is very important to bring in an international picture of what is here. I think if more tourists will come to Romania, the local population will realise that they shouldn't make the change with the modern aspects. It's nice to see the heritage preserved in the buildings as well.

The Minister of Tourism, Mrs. Elena Udrea, has a lot of initiatives, which are looking very positive. I've only been here to observe the Carpathian Garden initiative and it seems a good bases on which can be build a lot of things. I like also your country brand, it seems very good!

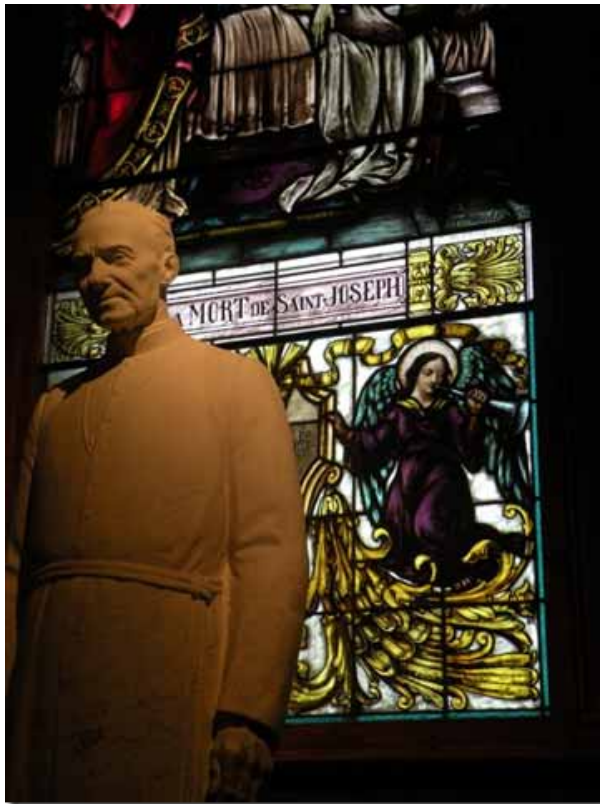


SPECIAL REPORT

Brother André: Simply a Saint

By Bob Fisher

Religion has shaped the culture and history of human society almost everywhere on the planet. This is especially true in Québec, Canada's predominantly French-speaking province. As a unique destination within the vast and complex cultural geography of Canada, Québec can only be truly understood in terms of its Catholic heritage.



St. André de Montréal

When Pope Benedict XVI officially approved bestowing sainthood on a simple carpenter from Montréal on February 19, 2010, he completed the final step in a process through which this man of humble origins had already been declared “venerable” and subsequently “blessed”. His canonization was the ultimate recognition of his life’s work.

Brother André is only the third saint in Québécois history; and the only one to have lived in modern times.

Previous to Brother André, Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys 1620-1700, and the Founder of the [Congregation of Notre-Dame](#) was declared a saint. And a year after her death, Marguerite d’Youville (1701-1771) was also declared a saint by the Vatican. She was the founder of the [Sisters of Charity](#), more commonly known as the “Grey Nuns”.

But there are other saints a bit closer to home — at least not too far from where I live. They are known as [The North American “martyred saints”](#).

These were the eight Jesuit Brothers who found themselves in the middle of the war between the Iroquois and the Huron. There are a number of reasons why these Jesuits were seen as a threat, primarily to the Iroquois who saw them as allies of the Hurons. The Iroquois perceived the Jesuits, rightly or wrongly, as helping to organize resistance to Iroquois raids among the Hurons. In addition, some have speculated that the arrival of the Jesuit Brothers in New France coincided with the arrival of new diseases from Europe, primarily smallpox, and consequently the Jesuit Brothers suffered from guilt by association.

The Jesuit martyrs were canonized by Pius XI in 1930. See a link to [The Martyrs Shrine in](#)

[Midland, Ontario](#). See also [Ste. Marie Among the Hurons](#). And there is also, by the way, a national shrine to the martyrs in [Auriesville, New York](#).

Sainthood, saintliness, holiness, and enlightenment

All four descriptors describe the legacy of Brother André, but the veneration and higher honours afforded individuals like him merit further consideration.

It is a fine distinction perhaps, but the Roman Catholic Church does not *create* a saint, but through the extensive process of canonization, it formally *recognizes* a saint. Furthermore sources I have consulted differ somewhat, the theological statement of faith is that all who eventually achieve the ultimate state of grace in Heaven are in fact also saints because they have “perfected” holiness.

Generally speaking however, a “saint” is someone who has been canonized if they lived after the year 1000AD. Furthermore, in 1969 the Roman Catholic Church deleted a number of saints from its liturgical calendar because of a lack of historical evidence affirming their sainthood.



The concept of holiness, however, is at the core of most religions; although that term is somewhat ambiguous and therefore difficult to define. On the other hand, the individual who exhibits exceptional holiness is a universal figure in many of the world’s religions, even in pre-Christian times. The enlightened one is perhaps more correctly described as “illuminated” because of the halo or aureole — a circular light — that has been depicted in religious iconography as surrounding the head of the individual. Such sacred figures were seen as pure beings who had attained the highest degree of perfection.

In his writings, for example, Homer describes a light surrounding the heads of heroes in the field



of battle. In Asian art, in particular the iconography of Tibetan Buddhism, flames — halo-like — are often depicted as surrounding the head of the venerated individual. This is also the case in Chinese and Japanese art as well as in some Islamic art. The light emanating from the body, usually the head, of exemplary individuals has also been depicted in images of what have been referred to as Hindu saints.

The narratives of extraordinary human beings who accomplish equally extraordinary tasks, and the attendant light surrounding

them, would appear to be universal in its imagery.

And in the vernacular of the 21st century, it is not uncommon to refer to extraordinary individuals as “saints”; which reminds me of the core lesson of *Le Petit Prince*: “Here is my secret. It is very simple. It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; What is essential is invisible to the eye.”

Such enlightened individuals are also seen as exemplary — usually charismatic leaders in a spiritual sense — special individuals who in some way are able to intercede on behalf of others. But the concepts of sainthood and saintliness can vary from religion to religion; and herein lie the “hues and shades” of holiness and sanctity as they apply to such extraordinary individuals. What is also universal, however, is that certain “moral” traits are seen as especially worthy of veneration.

In his article “Anatomy of Sainthood”, Jack Crabtree of the McKenzie Institute of Portland, Oregon comments:

“Our English word ‘awesome’ most closely approximates ‘holy’. If someone is holy, something about him moves us to hold him in awe. In the presence of someone who is holy, we will be somewhat intimidated, silenced, subdued, and restrained; because we will be made to feel our lowliness, to feel the humbleness of our own stature and position. We will feel compelled to respect him and to grant him the honor and recognition that he deserves. There is an aura about the holy person, a spookiness or feeling of heaviness which causes us to walk softly and not to be obtrusive, to know our place and not to act presumptuously, and to be respectful and deferential. In other words, the holy person has an aura about him that makes us stand in awe of him. Perhaps we do not stand in gaping wonder; rather we may look upon him with quiet, considerate respect, but in a kind of awe nonetheless.”

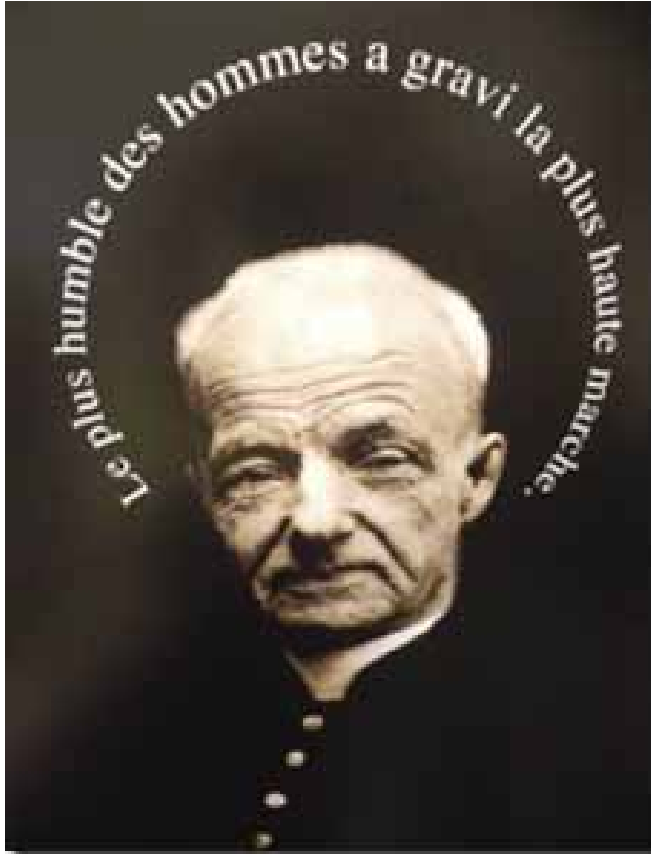
To read the full article, click on the following link: [“The Anatomy of Sainthood”](#).

A curious symbol of the history and culture of Québec

From a social history perspective, Brother André is somewhat of an anomaly in Québec because in the centuries-old struggle between the State and the Church in New France, which became especially critical in contemporary times during the lead-up to the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, the State and the Church in Québec often found themselves at cross-purposes.

The motto of Québec, *Je me souviens* (I remember), is another of those expressions that “lose something in the translation”. The phrase also has a certain implied ambiguity. The motto is enshrined on The National Assembly buildings in Québec City (other provinces have “provincial legislatures”) and symbolically and somewhat enigmatically conveys various levels of meaning.





To some, the motto is a reference to the fact that the Québécois became “a conquered people”, following the apocryphal 20-minute battle on The Plains of Abraham in Québec City in 1759 in which England and France fought over an expansion of their colonial empires. As history has shown, England won; and the destiny of North America was transfigured.

In Québec, there are those who say that the Québécois were not conquered but rather abandoned by the bourgeoisie, many of whom returned to France when they saw the “writing on the wall”. But for many, the term also suggests a deep historical attachment to French culture — long-standing traditions, and memories which have not been forgotten — and consequently the motto created considerable controversy in Canada.

In 1978, when nationalism was again on the rise in Québec, the guiding principle was changed from its former *La Belle Province* to *Je me souviens*. Today there is perhaps no

greater populist expression and reminder of the history and heritage of the people of Québec than the “new” motto which can be seen on license plates throughout Québec.

Furthermore, *la survivance* — another term that loses in the translation, meaning roughly cultural survival, on many levels. Cultural survival in its broadest terms has played a key role in the evolution of Québécois society. And according to Claude Bélanger of the Department of History of Marianopolis College in downtown Montréal:

“Without a doubt, the social institution which exercised the greatest influence and had the most impact on Québec was the Roman Catholic Church.... [but] was also echoed by the new social scientists that were trained in Québec in the period immediately following the Quiet Revolution. This group, which sought the modernization of Québec and championed the cause of radical change, condemned widely the *obscurantisme* that had characterized Québec in the period before the 1960s, and blamed the Church for much of the ills that many believed afflicted Québec in the contemporary era.”

As witnessed by other “distinct societies” throughout the world, social, cultural, and linguistic survival became the renewed and universal elements in the collective memory of the Québécois.

To read Bélanger’s summary of The Quiet Revolution, [click here](#).

In addition, because for a long time Québec was a primarily agrarian society, cultural survival — including most importantly language survival — was also reflected in what came to be called the *revanche des berceaux* (revenge of the cradle). Because of the population growth in what was then known as Lower Canada (primarily French-speaking); and which doubled every 25 years,

the clergy therefore faced enormous challenges in terms of serving what they saw as the needs of their parishioners. The ratio of priests per capita also quickly declined especially when Québec began to emerge as a major force on the world stage through [La Francophonie](#), an international political, social, and cultural organization in which significant numbers of the populations of member countries are francophones.

In due course, the narrative of Brother André, and those who identified with him and supported him, eventually brought him sainthood. He became a populist saint in the hearts and minds of many people even those beyond Québec's borders, but also was remembered as an ordinary working class man, and an iconic figure who represented the hopes and aspirations of a distinct society.

A [Holy Cross](#) Brother

Born into poverty and of very fragile health, Brother André was orphaned at the age of 12. However, he exhibited an intense spirituality early in life. And although he never rose in the ecclesiastical ranks (until he achieved sainthood of course), he worked primarily as a concierge at Notre Dame College, a job that included many menial duties.

But to be canonized as a saint, there had to be proof of miracle cures, and these were reported initially by word of mouth throughout the Catholic population of Québec. However, throughout his life Brother André steadfastly refused to take credit for any of them. He did however demonstrate an equally intense devotion to St. Joseph and frequently recommended that saint as an intermediary for anyone suffering physical diseases.

When brother André (born André Bessette) died in 1937 at the age of 91, more than a million people filed past his coffin in tribute to a man who would one day become a saint.

Travelling with the Catholic Media

I have been on many media or press trips; however none have been quite as focused or “inspiring” as the one called “Montréal, The City of a Hundred Steeples”.



As a bilingual Canadian, Montréal is my favourite city in North America and — as you may have already guessed — in some respects it is my “spiritual” home away from home.

Montréal, and this goes for much of Québécois culture, is always among the avant-garde. You only need to look at the artistry of the [Cirque de Soleil](#) to understand Québec's unique worldview and its intellectual courage. There are many other examples of its contemporary outward-looking worldview, including the fact that it has one of the healthiest and most dynamic music industries in the world. This too is the result of the historical-sociological-political history of what has been formally recognized as a “distinct society” by the Government of Canada.

As we moved from place to place in Montréal, my Catholic colleagues and I engaged in a mutual exploration of such issues as the nature of spirituality and “faith”, the use of the term “The Church”, and the challenges facing the Roman Catholic Church in the 21st century. They did not

shy away from any of these issues, but spoke of them with conviction and concern. We also dined well; after all we were in Montréal!

For me, it was a bit like being a lion in a den of benevolent Daniels.

Faith-based philosophies and other worldviews always give me reason to explore the unconscious elements at the core of our species, especially those that speak to our diversity *and* commonality. I believe in science and the scientific method; but I also believe in the indomitable and *catholic* spirit of humankind.

I also like Mother Teresa's statement:

"Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies."

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Audio components for this story

Father Marcel Demers of the Basilique Notre Dame in Old Montréal, talking about the state of Catholicism in Québec.

[To hear the above clip, click here.](#)

Nelson and the Blessing of the *Motocyclettes* at Saint Joseph's Oratory

[To hear the above clip, click here.](#)

Organ music from the Mass in the Chapel of the Saint Joseph Oratory

[To hear the above clip, click here.](#)

"Make A Joyful Sound," from the Mass in the Chapel of the Saint Joseph Oratory

[To hear the above clip, click here.](#)



Iconographic images and imagery to augment this story

[Click here](#) to see additional photos taken at St. Joseph's Oratory in Montréal. In order to view the images as a slideshow, click on "Slideshow" in the upper right-hand corner.

Resources

[St. Joseph's Oratory](#)

[The Oratory museum](#)

[Quebec Catholics \(CBC\)](#)

[Catholicism and the French Language, Henri Bourassa](#)

[The Roman Catholic Church and Quebec](#)

[The Quiet Revolution](#)

[Le Devoir: "Un patrimoine en danger"](#)

[The Catholic Church of Quebec — "Heritage in Danger"](#) (English version)

[The Saints of Canada \(Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops\)](#)