



## Cultural Round Table

*County Culture: It's more than you think!*

“We are all settlers in Prince Edward County. For over 200 years people have chosen to come to this island to create a life for themselves and their families and, in the process, to build a unique and remarkable County culture.

Our culture is a product of this beautiful place and the energy and passion of the many generations who settled here. It is the glue that connects old and new residents, our past and our future. It is where our history and creativity meet.”

Everyone is welcome to be part of the CRT; meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, at Shire Hall.

Cultural Round Table address to Council – April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Address by: Rick Zimmerman

Thank you to His Worship Mayor Finnegan and Honourable Members of Council, from the Cultural Round Table, for this opportunity to address you this evening. I've been given the honour of updating you on the CRT's accomplishments, especially over the last twelve months. I'll apologize ahead of time if any of my news today is a repeat for some of you, and I'll apologize to my colleagues on the CRT if I leave anything out. OK...that covers a whole whack of mistakes and omissions, I can move on...

As you know, the CRT grew out of the 2004 Economic Development Strategy, which identified culture as one of 4 pillars of the County's economic base. A Cultural Strategic Plan and a Municipal Cultural Policy adopted by Council articulated a commitment to culture and cultural development in Prince Edward County, and the CRT has continued to meet regularly since then to discover and develop the cultural contributions to County life, and to help retain the best of the old and welcome the best of the new.

We now have a website [www.culturalroundtable.ca](http://www.culturalroundtable.ca) where everyone can find the CRT schedule, and agenda and minutes for the meetings, along with the CRT's work plan, event updates, and related reports. We've also seen the successful launch of an electronic mapping of County cultural resources - a charting, with contact information, of well over 300 artists, businesses, organizations, shops and individuals that are a part of the cultural mosaic of the County. The County Cultural Map can be accessed from the CRT website.

A year ago we held a one-day celebration of the County's heritage - the Cultural Rally. The Rally put an exclamation point on the celebratory spirit of the County's cultural voices; it was a great success and we will plan another such event for next spring.

Currently, the Cultural Round Table is looking to Milford 200 to carry the County's Cultural torch in 2008. With something like 30 events planned throughout the year, we expect we will hear from the hard-working Milford 200 committee every couple of weeks.

The CRT acts as a greenhouse for new ideas and projects, offering a rich, creative environment to encourage growth - hopefully without the ill effect of too much fertilizer – and we've seen some these ideas transplanted successfully in the community.

One such project is the Arts Trail, launching, next month. The Arts Trail grew out of a CRT initiative that has since been cultivated by the artists, galleries and studios of the County; The Trail will be an arts experience covering over 200 kilometres of County Roads, from Carrying Place to Cressy – a Taste Trail for your other senses.

Another project the CRT can point proudly to is Paul Lang's County Quest, the oral history tours that will be available by Victoria Day. Paul started with an exciting idea to document the stories of the County; he met with Economic Development at the outset, and the CRT Chair at the time invited him to present his ideas at a meeting. Round Table member Ann Wardrop was an important ally in the early stages, and Recreation, Parks and Culture has played a role along the way as well – I don't want to leave anyone out – the important point is CRT gave focus and energy to an idea, and we are rewarded with a record of County history that can be enjoyed again and again, and that will share the County's heritage with scores of visitors, many of whom will hear these stories for the first time, and from those who lived them. Bravo Paul.

The CRT also held Community Forums, to gather opinion on and ideas about, new projects. One of these Forums contributed to a very exciting new proposal; The Prince Edward County Community Foundation. The CRT felt this was an idea that should be explored. From a meeting attended by about 25 interested individuals in February, the PECCF has already developed a solid framework; and have a strong, dedicated group of volunteers, chaired by Mr. John Dixon. There are 163 foundations in communities across Canada; it's not uncommon, that a larger, well-established Foundation act as an incubator in the initial stages, providing administrative and back office support while the new organization gets established, and until it can be relatively self-supporting, financially and administratively. The Community Foundation of Greater Kingston will play that role for the PECCF, with an expected launch for our new County Foundation late in 2008.

The CRT is also looking into the Cultural Capitals program.

This is a Federal Grant program, the objective of which is to support special activities that celebrate a community's arts and culture, and help integrate them into overall community planning. The Cultural Capitals Grant program funds up to 75% of a project, to a maximum of \$500,000. The grant deadline is November of this year for a 2011 award.

Some very exciting projects have been discussed – whether we go forward with grant application, or apply these project ideas to other initiatives has yet to be decided. Currently a CRT special committee is looking carefully at the grant application process, our resources, and the next steps...whether to submit an application this year, or wait, or to bring other recommendations back to the CRT. If a decision were reached to go forward with the Cultural Capitals application, a more formal deposition to Council would be made, with a more detailed account of the grant application process and expectations, and a request for support.

Finally, one last project to add - an Arts Centre.

This is my own project, growing out of my passion and persistence in the Performing Arts, and a desire to improve and extend access to the venues, large and small, where culture happens in the County. This new SMALL space is for workshops, music lessons and classes, and other opportunities especially for youth.

Centre for the Arts in Prince Edward, or CAPE will open June 1<sup>st</sup>, in Picton. I'm never sure whether to describe the location as "behind Currah's" or "where the pole-dancing classes were"; either way, it wouldn't be opening at all without the input, support and encouragement of the CRT.

I'd like to end by saying that I didn't have time to make a complete list of all those who have been a part of the evolving Cultural Round Table in my experience over even just the last two years. Contributors at the table have included artists and business people, County officers and volunteers, library, museum and gallery people, musicians, resource professionals, and students. This energy and diversification segues nicely, I think, into the CRT's vision statement:

"We are all settlers in Prince Edward County. For over 200 years people have chosen to come to this island to create a life for themselves and their families and, in the process, to build a unique and remarkable County culture.

Our culture is a product of this beautiful place and the energy and passion of the many generations who settled here. It is the glue that connects old and new residents, our past and our future. It is where our history and creativity meet."

Everyone is welcome to be part of the CRT; meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, at Shire Hall.

Thank you for your time this evening.