



Something new at MPE!

Launch of the fundraising campaign "A quickly evolving museum"

Our main goal over the coming decade is the public opening of the Museum of Paleontology and Evolution. Recently, the Regroupement économique et social du Sud-Ouest (RESO) has offered to help us both logistically and financially for the preliminary studies leading to the opening of the Museum. RESO's mandate is to promote the economic revitalization of the Southwest Borough, which fits perfectly with our wish to open the museum in this district of Montreal. We bravely defended our proposal before the committee of RESO's Fonds d'Économie Sociale, who recognized the value of our project, and gave us \$12,000 for the realization of a strategic plan. On our side, the MPE will supply \$5,455.75 of its own money. A strategic planning consultant has been chosen: it will be Desjardins Marketing Stratégique Inc., a firm based in Quebec City, but active everywhere in the province and with extensive experience in the museum field. Lupien et Matteau Architectes will collaborate with the strategic planning. The contract was signed on May 10, 2009. It is an extraordinary and very exciting event, because we are finally taking a first concrete step towards opening the museum.

Strategic planning should be followed by the writeup of a business plan. This is a larger step, which will lead to the selection of a site, of financial partners, and of an architectural plan. It is also financially much greater. RESO is ready to support us in this second step at the rate of up to two-thirds of the amount required. We expect this step to cost about \$35,000. Unfortunately, the Museum's bank account is currently inadequate (slightly) to pay even the \$ 5,455.75 needed for strategic planning. It is easy to understand that the completion of both stages of the planning effort will require a level of financial outlays to which we are not accustomed.

We therefore decided to launch a public fundraising campaign entitled "A quickly evolving museum". The campaign targets on one hand the members, but also and mostly the friends of the Museum, both academic and corporate or political. We anticipate spending approximately \$75,000 during the coming year, including \$25,000 for the improvement of laboratory: purchase of equipment and books, expansion of the workspace and storage space, installation of sprinklers against fire, insuring the premises, etc. Because planning is expected to cost a total of \$50,000 and RESO is willing to pay about \$32,000, and since we have \$3,000 in reserve, we still have to find \$40,000. That is the reason for the \$40,000 target. Any shortage will result in reductions to improvement projects in the laboratory, since the planning consulting contracts, once signed, are incompressible. We hope, however, to accomplish all the improvements planned for the laboratory because they are greatly needed.

[An invitation to participate in the fundraising campaign](#)

During the coming weeks, we will solicit your participation in this campaign. All your gifts are precious, no matter what the amount. Every donation means that you support the project, and confirms that our continued efforts go in the right direction. Remember that the MPE is a charity (890282445RR 0001) recognized by Revenue Canada and Revenue Quebec, and that it can issue receipts for income tax purposes.



Strategic Planning

The strategic planning work that began May 10 with the signing of the contract must be completed by August 31. An interruption in the work is scheduled between mid-June and late July, while Mario is in France. The firm chosen, Desjardins Marketing Stratégique, will work together with a steering committee consisting of 3 members of the MPE, Mario Cournoyer, Jacques Lachance and Jean-Pierre Guilbault, as well as Charles Gagnon, representative of RESO. Five staff members of Desjardins Marketing will be involved at one time or another in the planning.

The contract stipulates that Desjardins Marketing Inc. will:

1) achieve an organizational diagnostic plan of the external and internal environment of the MPE, enhancing that written up previously by board members. This diagnostic should place special emphasis on the external environment, particularly in terms of the tendencies in the cultural and museum sector in Montreal and the Southwest (qualitative market analysis).

Once this is done, the diagnostic plan should demonstrate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the environment of the MPE. The diagnostic plan should be validated by the Steering Committee before proceeding to the next step.

2) organize and host a meeting at which the Steering Committee and some members of the Board of Directors of the MPE will, from the diagnostic plan presented by the consultant, identify the various issues facing the organization and select strategic directions for the three years to come. Priorities will have to be established between these strategic issues.

3) identify with the Steering Committee concrete and measurable goals and integrate them into an action plan that will stretch over three years. This action plan will be presented to the Board of Directors and be approved by it.

Strategic planning represents the first step towards that final opening of the Museum of Paleontology and Evolution.



The traveling exhibit "Dinosaurs and Co.", a partnership between ourselves, the Musée de la Nature et des Sciences de Sherbrooke and the Montreal Planetarium. The bilingual exhibition started in Sherbrooke in 2001 and from there traveled through all the provinces of Canada. It is presently in the Clarington Museum in Bowmanville, Ontario, and it will open at the Galt Museum in Lethbridge, Alberta, in October.



Laboratory for Conservation and Research - MPE

Book purchase

Since the beginning of 2009, the library of the Conservation and Research Laboratory— MPE has made an important acquisition: we purchased 18 volumes of the Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology published by the Paleontological Institute of the University of Kansas.

To further enhance this improvement, Mario Cournoyer has donated 14 other volumes of the Treatise, a value of \$450. Started nearly 50 years ago, the Treatise now includes 49 volumes plus a dozen more at various stages of preparation.

More than 300 authors have taken part and most groups of fossil invertebrates have been described. This tool will unquestionably facilitate the identification of specimens in the collection of the MPE.

Loan of fossils (part 2)

In January 2009, Mr. Frank Habets, amateur paleontologist from the Ottawa area, lent us a score of beautiful fossils. This loan is in addition to that of the summer of 2008. They are mostly trilobites (see photo at right) from Ontario, but there are also some echinoderms (crinoids and cystoid: cousins of sea stars) and one large conularid (unclassifiable animal, possibly related to jellyfish and corals) found in Belleville, Ontario.



One specimen is really exceptional: it consists of a slab containing many individuals of the cystoid *Pleurocystites* sp. (see photo at left). The body of this animal was composed of plates, with a stem (which could serve as a means of anchoring) and two "arms" called brachiola that were used to capture food. It is the great number of individuals on the plate makes it an exceptional specimen.

This long-term loan will help fuel our future exhibitions. Once again, we thank Mr. Habets for this loan of fossils.



Hiring a contractor

At the meeting of April 15, the Board of Directors decided to hire our president, Mario Cournoyer, on a contractual basis, in order to accomplish many jobs whether they concern strategic planning, the fundraising campaign or the planned improvements to the museum premises. We could add "etc." to this list because the needs are many and varied. Being all amateurs, we know how difficult it is to break free for non-professional activities, especially when one has children.

In the coming months, a lot of work and activities will have to be done which cannot be done at a rate of, say, 3 or 4 hours per weekend. Seeing how Mario had difficulty finding spare time, we thought of hiring him. Mario is an independent worker, self-employed and working on contracts, which allows him to free himself completely, as long as he is provided with a replacement income. The Museum will therefore hire him for 13 weeks, 5 days per week, 6 hours per day, at \$ 16.94 per hour, including taxes. The total cost will be \$ 6,606.60. As a responsible member, you're probably wondering where the money comes from. A donation from Mr. Jean-Pierre Guilbault in the said amount will solve this thorny problem. With the tax credit to which donors are entitled, Mr. Guilbault will have made a net expenditure of \$ 3,140.11. A contract will have to be signed between the Museum, the donor and Mario. Payments will be made on issuance of invoices. Mario will be free to insert some days of his usual work between the $13 \times 5 = 65$ days he will work for the Museum. He will not be paid for the kind of activities he usually does for the MPE, such as presiding over the Board of Directors, accompanying group excursions, or doing the usual accounting. Mrs. Sylviane Thibault, accountant specializing in NPOs, and member of the MPE, confirmed to us that this arrangement was conform to rules and legal.

In the current situation, where the need for labour at the Museum increases rapidly and where deadlines must be met, this solution appeared to us to be the only one able to "face the music".



A few gastropods of Champlain Sea age collected in the sand pits at Saint-Nicolas, Quebec. From top to bottom:
Volutopsius sp.; *Boreotrophon* sp.; *Colus* sp.;
Oenopota sp.



Descriptive card of the specimen

Specimen number: MPEP106.6
Identification: Fish, Osmerids
Genus and species : *Mallotus villosus* (capelin)
Age : Pleistocene/Holocene boundary
Geological formation: Champlain Sea Clay
Locality: Ruisseau Bradley near
Eardley, Québec
Finder: Mrs. Nathalie Daoust et M. Mario Courmoyer
Date : July 23, 2005



This clayey concretion preserves at least five partial or nearly complete skeletons of a species of fish, *Mallotus villosus* or capelin. It is not uncommon to find such fossils in the clay sections of the Ottawa area. On the contrary, a group of individuals inside the same concretion is less common. Capelin came to the western part of the Champlain Sea (Ottawa area) to reproduce 10 000 years ago.

Reference : Harington, C.R., 1983. Significance of the fossil locality at Green Creek, Ontario. *Trail & Landscape*, 17 : 164-178.



Membership

As at the beginning of every year, we normally request you that your membership be renewed. Please find attached to this bulletin a copy of the membership renewal form. Remember that you can also make a donation, as the Museum is a charity, duly registered with Revenue Canada, and entitled to issue receipts for income tax purposes.

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