

October 12, 2006

To the Attendees of the CAPT Town Hall Meeting,

My name is Laura Culic, and I am the Executive Director of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour. The CSPWC is a vibrant, active national Society founded in 1925 by a dozen distinguished Canadian artists, among them A. J. Casson, Arthur Lismer and Franklin Carmichael, members of the Group of Seven. The Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour enjoys the Patronage of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, The Governor General of Canada. The CSPWC has over 250 Elected Members across Canada, and nearly 300 Associates.

In late September of this year, myself and three other members of the CSPWC enjoyed a week long painting expedition in the Agawa Canyon, staying in the camp car. We immersed ourselves in the beauty of the park, and painted scenes once painted by the Group of Seven. Although every aspect of our adventure was superb, we couldn't help but notice the sad condition of the trains. It has since come to our attention that passenger and tour train service may be in some jeopardy, and that there is a definite need to allot more funds towards the maintenance of the trains and the line.

Myself and the three other artists, who are Marc Gagnon CSPWC President, Tim Packer CSPWC Past President, and Barbara McGuey CSPWC past Board Member, are committed to doing what we can to influence corporate and government decisions, and help preserve and improve the Agawa Central Railway.

As members of a Society that was founded, in part, by members of the Group of Seven, we are keenly aware of the historical significance and powerful connection to Canadian art that the Park provides. Practical access to this natural, historic and artistically inspirational treasure is available by only one means: the railway. We strongly urge the Management to see to it that the ACR is maintained at a level to allow it to fulfill its potential in offering access to this sublimely beautiful location. We see it as an integral role of the ACR to allow Canadian artists access to the park and to provide artists with the opportunity to maintain connections artistically and spiritually with men who are artistic icons to Canadians.

There are many significant reasons to keep the ACR well maintained, I am sure. It is my hope that our artistic voice will bear some weight as well, at the town meeting, and with those in position to make decisions on the future of the Agawa Central Railway.

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