

SPREADING THE WORD

Culture and the Civic Society

A Symposium

September, 1997

Toronto Arts Council

Spreading the Word

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a report on

Culture and the Civic Society
An International Symposium on Cities and their Support of Culture

TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL

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City support of culture in London, Montreal, New York, Sydney and Toronto

London

population: 7 million approx.

annual cultural budget: \$495,000,000 approx. (£220,000,000 approx.)

Montreal

population: (City of Montreal proper) 1,030,000 approx.

annual cultural budget: \$72,500,000 approx.

Note: The communauté urbaine de Montréal (the greater Montreal area), consisting of the City of Montreal plus 28 other municipalities, also provides cultural support in addition to the above.

New York City

population: 7 million approx.

annual cultural budget: \$128,750,000 approx. (\$95,370,000 U.S. approx.)

Sydney

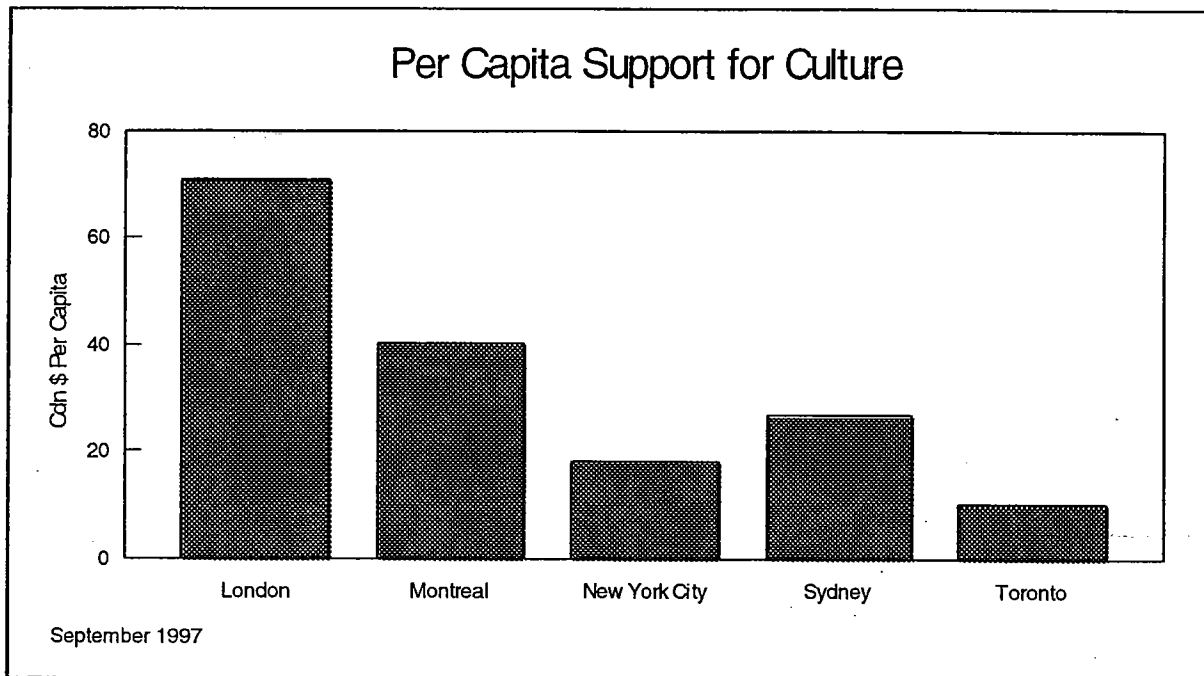
population: (greater Sydney area) 4 million approx.

annual cultural budget: \$107,000,000 approx. (\$100,000,000 Aus. approx.)

Toronto

population: 2.3 million approx.

annual cultural budget: \$24,000,000 approx.



SPREADING THE WORD

Searching for the opportunities presented by the new city, Toronto Arts Council and Metro Parks and Culture held a two day international symposium at the Art Gallery of Ontario in September 1997. We hope to emerge from the coming transition as a new city, more vibrant than we were before. We can't afford to fail. The lively, burgeoning, bubbling cultural life nourished here so carefully over the past 25 years could seep away if we don't choose well. Opportunity and risk are two sides of the same line.

The Greeks, who knew about cities, culture and their interactions, invented the symposium which is a gathering for the free interchange of ideas. We invited people from home and abroad: we wanted to talk about how the creation of the new city might shape arts and culture in Toronto, how we might shape the new city to preserve what we do well. We wanted to know how things are done elsewhere. We wanted to know how Toronto compares and contrasts. We were determined that if we heard something good we would copy shamelessly. This is what cities have always been about--sharing ideas, and spreading the good ones faster.

We invited Canadian friends, such as: former Mayor David Crombie; Gilles Lefebvre, executive director of Montreal's CACUM--a body similar to the Toronto Arts Council; David Mirvish of Mirvish Productions; Larry Rudolph of Hummingbird Communications; Norman Seagram of Harbourfront Centre; Loreen Lalonde of Livent; tourism experts like John Hamilton, Joan Pierre and Dr. Marion Joppe. Jessica Fraser from the Toronto Theatre Alliance spoke about non-profit theatres; artists and community activists Quammie Williams, Lillian Allen, Cliff Dyke spoke about the grass roots. Visual artist David Hlynsky and restorationist Rollo Myers described how public art and preservation of our heritage build a civic life.

We also invited friends from around the world, such as: Graham Wiffen, Director of Public Affairs of the London Arts Board in Britain; Susan Rothschild, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City; Fleur Brown, manager of Public Affairs, Tourism and City Marketing, Sydney and Julie Walton, a Sydney city councillor, who both came all the way from Australia. Moira Johnson, a cultural consultant in Paris, came to explain how the major European cities organize their cultural lives.

The symposium was open to the public and it was free. We told 2000 people about it and remarkably, 200 attended, including a number of elected officials and candidates running for the new City Council. Mayoral candidates Barbara Hall and Mel Lastman attended the reception and both spoke of their commitment to and history of supporting the arts. Members of the media came too.

Why so much interest?

Everyone charged with reorganizing Toronto recognizes the central role of arts and culture in building this community. The economic arguments for public investment in culture and heritage are old news--arts and culture employ over 10% of the workforce in the new city; arts and culture are recession proof; \$1 invested in arts and culture translates into \$10 in economic activity, which pays back the initial public investment many times over. We also know the intangible and unmeasurable truths about public support of civic culture. We still drink from the fountain of Athens as it was in 500 BC. The miraculous cultural ferment unleashed there with help from the public purse is still alive in our world. We believe that what we make here will be remembered long after we are gone. Our town is among the most culturally diverse in the world: it is exploding with ideas and vision and talent. It is the new blending of traditions from around the world, the inventiveness and energy of our artists that makes Toronto so spectacularly itself. They will transform the new Toronto into a place like no other. We know we have to get this amalgamation right.

We heard a few short speeches. We asked a lot of fundamental questions. We got some shocking answers. We proposed discussion topics, but things kept bubbling up that we hadn't expected. Most important, we learned that even in the way we organize arts support we have been true to ourselves. Toronto's traditions of making do, of being fair, of concern for social peace and order, have nurtured a unique place for artists that is beyond any price at all.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Cities must find ways to ensure that their cultural programs and services provide ongoing support to key organizations and institutions while ensuring that new projects and possibilities can also be capitalized upon.
- Cities need to support culture “from the bottom up.” Large organizations and institutions are important but cultural activity at the grass roots fuels these organizations. David Mirvish referred to this as the “r&d lab” for Toronto’s economically vital professional theatre scene.
- The cultural sector is key for economic growth. It is increasingly important as an employer in all of the cities represented.
- The role of the individual artist is vitally important to cities. They enliven communities with their work and generate projects which improve quality of life and have positive economic impact. It is a challenge for cities to develop programs and services for individual artist but a challenge which should be met.
- The arts and culture are great builders of communities.
- Cities are increasingly involving themselves in cultural and arts education for children and youth. All of the cities represented have programs in this area. In New York, the city’s Cultural Affairs Department is central to re-introducing the arts into the standard school curriculum. The arts have been proven to develop the skills needed for many knowledge-based industries. Without a workforce educated in this area, cities are less attractive to business.
- Culture is a vital ingredient in how major cities promote themselves internationally. A key factor in Sydney’s winning bid for the 2000 Olympics was a major roster of cultural events.
- Preservation of heritage buildings is a priority for cities like London, Sydney and New York, all of which have more advantageous tax incentives and programs to encourage preservation than Toronto. These buildings are seen as integral elements of the city’s cultural life.
- The ideal administrative system for a city’s cultural programs and services should include arm’s length administration of funding working in partnership with a culture department and with strong support from elected officials.

AND ON THE FIRST DAY

How Other Cities Spend 300% more on Arts and Culture than Toronto

The first shock was how much more every other major city spends on arts and culture than we do. Toronto, soon to be the fourth largest city on the continent (north of Mexico), with a combined population of 2.3 million, is an arts and culture tightwad in comparison with these cities.

The seven municipal governments which will merge to form the new city spend only \$24 million a year combined on heritage and the arts. By comparison, we learned that Montreal, with a population of 1,030,000, spends \$72.5 million a year. Grants are distributed to organizations through a single arm's length agency, CACUM. Long ago Montreal decided that culture and memory matters. This has paid off: Toronto surpassed Montreal as Canada's business and population centre two decades ago, but due to its great arts and culture promotion, Montreal is still seen internationally as Canada's major city.

Sydney, Australia, with a population of 4 million spends \$107 million. The city gives no grants to individual artists (the state and federal governments do that), but it supports and creates public projects, the infrastructure for artists and their organizations. Sydney uses public events, especially outdoor festivals to cleverly promote cultural tourism. Its canny use of its vibrant public culture and its heritage preservation were powerful reasons why Sydney was awarded the 2000 Olympic Games.

New York City, which amalgamated its boroughs one hundred years ago, has a population of 7 million and spends \$128 million a year on culture grants to institutions and organizations. Arts funding is tucked close to politicians' bosoms: most is disbursed from the Mayor's office. New York City owns its major cultural institutions and also spends approximately \$162 million a year on their capital funding. New Yorkers understand the economic arguments for public support for the arts: their vibrant civic culture attracts Fortune 500 companies, which buy services from the financial district, the driving wheel of New York's economy. New York City has also learned about the dangers of cutting back. Since New York cut its arts education programs a few years ago, its students have emerged from city high schools unable to qualify for entry to New York's renowned design institutes--which train the talent running its huge clothing and design industries. New York has begun to restore arts and cultural programs to its public schools.

London spends everyone else into the ground. More than one third of all the arts workers in Britain live in London. With a population of 7 million, \$495 million a year is spent on arts and culture, \$70 for every man, woman and child in the city. Some is distributed by the London Arts Board, one of ten regional, arm's length arts agencies in the country, and funded by the Arts Council of England. The rest is disbursed directly to major institutions by the Arts Council and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (formerly National Heritage). The London Arts Board funds institutions, festivals, and programs which make a space for the artist to shine. It also makes grants to individuals. As with Montreal and New York, culture and heritage are the main vehicles through which London is promoted to the world.

Spreading the Word

No one in Europe wastes time arguing about whether there should be public investment in arts and culture. The larger European cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, Munich, spend huge sums. Regional centres like Lyon and Strasbourg spend as much as 20% of their annual budgets on arts and culture. Germany spends \$15 billion a year. But there are drawbacks to such largesse. There is no such thing as arm's length funding. Investments are directed by politicians and bureaucracies. They find their way to the politically acceptable.

FIRST DAY - FINDINGS

Toronto does well what everyone else thinks is crucial--encouraging initiatives from the bottom up. Most agreed that it's at ground level where real cultural energy and vitality abounds. As David Mirvish put it, the non-profit theatre sector is the research and development lab for his polished commercial productions. David Mirvish suggested that the city needs to look at its tax policies on live theatre, and more fairly treat commercial and non-profit theatres. Theatres should not be taxed at the same rate as cinemas since they are more labour intensive and cost more to run.

It was also widely recognized that arts organizations need to find partners in the business community and vice versa. Such partnerships are mutually beneficial.

However, all insist that governments have a decisive role to play in stimulating culture. Yet governments have been increasingly downloading this responsibility from the national to the local level where the resources are thinnest. Everywhere, municipalities are having trouble aligning available budgets with needs. Torontonians complained that no one can fill the huge holes in culture and heritage budgets created by the provincial and federal governments' cutbacks. Many of the smaller non-profit organizations are perilously close to collapse.

These cutbacks are increasingly hard to fathom: they put at risk the one sector where job creation is most reliable and the leverage of public dollars invested to economic activity created is the greatest. Gilles Lefebvre reports that 26,000 jobs were created by Montreal's cultural sector in 1996/97. Everybody worries that corporate partners can't make up for what's missing. Norman Seagram, chairman of Harbourfront, explained that this federally established non-profit organization attracts 3 million visitors a year to Toronto, yet receives only a \$4 million grant from the federal government and \$.75 million from the City of Toronto. The Centre needs to find more corporate sponsorships, but Seagram believes that what the cultural sector needs is "responsible government that will make the economy flourish as culture does mean jobs."

Paradoxes also emerged. Toronto may be last in spending, but it pays close attention to grass roots development. All of the municipalities that will form the new Toronto provide a wide range of support--everything from funding established cultural institutions, to street festivals, to shared information programs, to grants to artists.

AND ON THE SECOND DAY

How Culture Builds Cities

Ideas flowed liberally. Many fascinating community building projects were described. New York City runs culture programs for disadvantaged children in public housing; it uses the making of public art to pull communities together. Arts and jobs and training are central concerns in the Bronx. It has created a business centre for the arts, a quarterly business arts publication, and a fine arts training and manpower centre.

Sydney funds public art on building sites; its *Streets Alive* program literally takes art outside--including Opera in the Park. *Border Lives* gives youth access to computer artwork programs: the results are displayed in bus shelters.

London has an arts workshop which provides programs for immigrant groups learning to adapt to a new culture. It provides funds for Asian and Black community theatres. It sponsors various writing competitions and partnerships in arts education programs.

Public art is used everywhere to attract arts tourists who spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year around the world. Montreal runs festivals--a different one every month from the Montreal World Film Festival to the International Jazz Festival.

Toronto's ethnocultural events are great city builders. Caribana brings in \$40 million a year and attracts audiences of up to a million. Tourism Toronto believes 22 million visitors came to Toronto in 1996 and a quarter of all business travellers chose to come here rather than someplace else, so they could also enjoy a cultural event. "Blockbuster cultural events are an easy sell," according to Tourism Toronto's director of communications, John Hamilton.

SECOND DAY - FINDINGS

The arts also need to be marketed to children, the creators and audiences of the future. Suggestions were made that tickets should be made available to school groups on an advantageous basis, that the city could organize this as some other jurisdictions do.

The role of the individual artist is vitally important to the life of cities. Artists enrich their neighbourhoods, flavour their communities, artists generate the projects, the visions, the new styles, the new ideas. They need to be supported directly.

Lillian Allen proposed establishing community partnerships to identify new voices and help them to emerge.

Rollo Myers made a plea to save 5000 heritage buildings in the city. None of them are safe: arguments must be put forward about why it makes good business sense to keep them. He called for tax rebate programs, as exist in New York and Sydney to encourage preservation.

All agreed that heritage preservation and cultural tourism are mutually supportive. People come to see places that are particular, not places just like everywhere else. As Julie Walton of Sydney put it, you need to have a sense when you are standing somewhere in a city that you couldn't be anywhere else.

Graham Wiffen argued that promotion should not be done through stereotypical image mongering--such as the CN Tower and the Mounties--but should show off the facets of Toronto's cultural life that are unique.

Bronwyn Drainie suggested we borrow from Paris the use of museum cards. Tourists purchase entry to all of Paris' museums, large and small, and are introduced to smaller institutions they might not know about. Others proposed that the TTC should get involved with cultural tourism promotion. Once again, as has been suggested repeatedly for years, one new culture department should be set up for the whole of the new city where all information, licenses and permissions for cultural events and cultural industries can be sought and received.

Tourism dollars are being cut by governments as deeply as culture. Tourism Toronto now has the same budget as the equivalent organization in Calgary.

Cutbacks are endangering Toronto's status as the third largest English language theatre centre in the world. If theatres go dark there will be a large impact on the night life of the downtown core where most of Toronto's non-profit theatres are located.

URGENTLY

These matters need to be addressed by a new culture department, working in partnership with a knowledgeable, efficient grass roots funding agency. Together they could coordinate and manage these complex issues as part of a whole system. The new city should not download culture, arts and heritage to parks and recreation departments. They were created to serve different needs.

AND FINALLY

We learned that culture builds cities, it draws visitors like horses to water, bees to honey, it brings in new dollars, it creates a centre for a vibrant civic life. But the converse is also true. When public support isn't there, when institutions close, when there is only private life at the centre, the whole city is impoverished.

A living civic culture requires public maintenance and support. It doesn't take much--1% of the new city's budget would allow the new Toronto to have its say.

***SYMPOSIUM AGENDA
AND PARTICIPANTS***

CULTURE AND THE CIVIC SOCIETY: AGENDA

DAY 1 - Monday, September 15, 1997

Opening Remarks - Anne Collins, President, Toronto Arts Council

Keynote Speaker - David Crombie, Chair of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust

- **Overview of how London, Montreal, New York, Sydney and European cities support arts and culture through city programs and services**

Moderator: Peter Finestone, Director of Economic Development Division, City of Toronto

Panellists: Graham Wiffen, London; Gilles Lefebvre, Montreal; Susan B. Rothschild, New York; Fleur Brown, Sydney; Moira Johnson speaking about a number of European cities

- **Culture Means Business: culture and economic development** (same panel as above)
- **Some views on culture and economic development in Toronto**

Moderator: Peter Finestone, Director of Economic Development Division, City of Toronto

Panellists: Larry Rudolph, Hummingbird Communications; Norman Seagram, Harbourfront Centre, David Mirvish, Mirvish Productions

Summation - Kathleen Sharpe, Director, Culture Division, Metro Parks and Culture

DAY 2 - Tuesday, September 16, 1997

Opening Remarks - Kathleen Sharpe, Director, Culture Division, Metro Parks and Culture

- **Culture as a builder of communities**

Moderator: Micheline McKay, The Advocacy Group and The Arts Advocate

Panellists: Susan B. Rothschild, New York; Fleur Brown, Sydney; Graham Wiffen, London; Gilles Lefebvre, Montreal

- **Some views on culture as a builder of communities in Toronto**

Moderator: Micheline McKay, The Advocacy Group and The Arts Advocate

Panellists: Quammie Williams, artist; Cliff Dyke, Arts Etobicoke; Lillian Allen, artist; David Hlynsky, artist; Rollo Myers, Coordinator of Old Town 1793

- **Cultural Tourism**

Moderator: Janice Price, Senior Manager of Marketing and Development, Hummingbird Centre for the Performing Arts

Panellists: Fleur Brown, Sydney; Graham Wiffen, London; Gilles Lefebvre, Montreal; Susan B. Rothschild, New York

- **Some views on cultural tourism in Toronto**

Moderator: Janice Price, Senior Manager of Marketing and Development, Hummingbird Centre for the Performing Arts

Panellists: Loreen Lalonde, Livent; Joan Pierre, festival consultant, John Hamilton, Tourism Toronto; Dr. Marion Joppe, Ryerson Polytechnic University; Jessica Fraser, Toronto Theatre Alliance

Wrap up - Rita Davies, Executive Director, Toronto Arts Council

PANELLISTS FROM LONDON, MONTREAL, NEW YORK, PARIS AND SYDNEY:

Fleur Brown, City of Sydney, Manager of Public Affairs, Tourism and City Marketing
Moirra Johnson, Culture and Tourism Consultant based in Paris
Gilles Lefebvre, Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal (CACUM)
Susan B. Rothschild, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Assistant Commissioner
for Cultural Institutions
Julie Walton, Councillor, City of Sydney
Graham Wiffen, The London Arts Board, Head of Public Affairs

PANELLISTS FROM TORONTO:

Lillian Allen, poet and community arts advocate
Cliff Dyke, Chair of Arts Etobicoke
Jessica Fraser, Executive Director of the Toronto Theatre Alliance
John Hamilton, Director of Communications for Tourism Toronto
David Hlynsky, artist, writer and media arts teacher
Dr. Marion Joppe, Professor of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson
Polytechnic University
Loreen Lalonde, Vice President of Sales, Canada for Livent
David Mirvish, President, Mirvish Productions; Owner of The Royal Alexandra and The
Princess of Wales theatres in Toronto and The Old Vic Theatre in London, England
Rollo Myers, Coordinator of Old Town 1793 - A Plan for Renewal
Joan Pierre, Events Specialist, Past Executive Director of Caribbean Cultural Committee
Larry Rudolph, Director of Corporate Affairs, Hummingbird Communications
Norman Seagram, Chairman of the Board, Harbourfront Centre
Quammie Williams, musician, composer, actor, storyteller, director, writer, video producer and
editor

MODERATORS:

Peter Finestone, Director of Economic Development for the City of Toronto
Micheline McKay, principal of The Advocacy Group
Janice Price, Senior Manager of Marketing and Development for the Hummingbird Centre for
the Performing Arts

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

David Crombie, Chair of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Chancellor of Ryerson
Polytechnic University, Mayor of Toronto from 1972-1978

For further information about panellists and speakers, please contact the Toronto Arts Council.

*List of Attendees to the Culture and the Civic Society
Symposium*

Robert Achtemichuk	Edward Falkenberg
Miriam Adams	Sharon Fernandez
Stewart Aikman	Melanie Fernandez
Catherine Allman	Madlyn Ferrier
Alga Alsen	John Ferrier
Martin Amermak	Cathi Forbes
Carol Anderson	Christa Galligan
Sherri Appell	Sharon Ganesh
Terry Ashford	Sandy Gene
Allison Bain	Roger Gibbs
Rebecca Baird	Nathan Gilbert
Billyann Balay	Mallory Gilbert
Janis Barlow	Jenny Ginder
Gwen Bartleman	Nicholas Goldschmidt
Rose Bellosillo	Arno Gotthardt
Anne Bermonte	Andrea Graham
Karen Black	Susan Graham
Brainerd Blyden-Taylor	Dina Graser
Cathy Bolan	Denis Greenall
John Booker	William Greer
Roy Bowers	Rina Greer
Pat Bradley	Diane Grell-Thow
Robin Breon	Beth Hanna
Dr. Jay Brodbar	Shirley E. Hart
Rebecca Cain	Dominic Hay
Barbara Carey	Sally Hennessy
Beverley Carret	Valerie Hepburn
Marlene Chan	Bobby Herriot
Dr. Lien Chao	Gail Hill
Bruce Chown	Deyanne Holmes
Joy Cohnstaedt	Sarah Hood
Anne Collins	Mark Hopkins
Terry Constantino	Nalo Hopkinson
Allison Conway	Brenda House
David Craig	Joy Hughes
Dr. Warren E. Crichlow	Susan Hughes
Ineke de Klerk-Limbortie	Jill Humphries
Rita Davies	Beverley Hurlbut
Mabinti Dennis	Sarah J.E. Iley
Sonia Dolar	Rosalyn Jacob-Edwards
Doreen Dotto	Michelle Jacques
Bronwyn Drainee	Dorsey James
Karin Eaton	R. Scott James
Janet Ellis	Jean Johnson
John Elvidge	Councillor Anne Johnston
Jeff Evenson	Tim Jones
Wayne Fairhead	Sue Kaiser

Spreading the Word

Paul King
Susan Kohler
Lyne Kuryld
Chris Kyle
Debra Lary
Angela Lee
Alexander Lee
Michel Leger
Nenagh Leigh
Howard J. Levine
Wendy Lilly
Mike Lipowski
Doug Livingston
Sylvia Lustgarten
Terrill Maguire
Jane Marsland
Merle Matheson
Councillor Pam McConnell
Heidi McKenzie
Joan Miles
C.A. Carlo Milessa
Siobhan Mitchell
Carl Morey
Christy Morrow
Richard Mortimer
Kristine Murphy
Alberta Nokes
Roberta O'Brien
Carol Oliver
Jane Perdue
Jerry Pergolesi
Lillian Petroff
Renee Piche
Angela Rebeiro
Wayne Reeves
Beth Reynolds
Rodolfo Rivas-Franco
Deborah Robert
Frank Rodrigues
Chris Rosati
Malka Rosenberg
Walter Ross
Ian Ross
Patricia S. Rubin
Dan Schneider
Robert R. Scott
Susanna Shankman
Kathleen Sharpe
Leslie Shor
Dorothy Schoichet
Robert Sirman

Fausta Siu
Terry Smith
Selvam Sridas
Tamara Steinberg
Susan Stevenson
Jini Stolk
Richard Stromberg
Elizabeth Szathmary
Geoffrey E. Taylor
Christopher Thorpe
Kim Tobin
Kim Tomczak
Sandra Tulloch
Pat Turcotte
Diane Uslaner
Pamela Wachna
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Joyce Zemans

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