

THE BOARD



We are Extensions of Our Country's Foreign Policy

Major festivals and events can be powerful catalysts for bilateral relations between countries, in addition to being a channel for the enhancement of diplomatic relations. Last week, I was invited to the Residence of the US Ambassador in Canada for a special reception to celebrate "Memphis in May" which is paying tribute to Canada as part of their 2016 Festival.

Long time IFEA Member, former IFEA Board Chair and good friend, Jim Holt, and his team from Memphis in May did a remarkable job in selecting an impressive cross section of Canadian Culture. From performances by "Les 7 doigts de la main," to Neil Young and Canadian Celebrity Chefs, Memphis will become, for a few days, a microcosm of Canadian Canuck lifestyle and an extension of Canadian "cool factor" in US territory. The alliance also included sustainable platforms such as an exchange between high school students and a trade mission for the business community. Jim, being one of our industry's experts, made sure to cover all angles. A significant delegation of elected officials and business people from Memphis also attended meetings in 4 major Canadian cities, paving the way for numerous new economic possibilities. The joy in the eyes of the US Ambassador

in Canada was a powerful testimony of the success of the operation.

South of the border, our friend Diana Mayew, CFEE and her stellar team of the National Cherry Blossom Festival paved the way in Washington D.C. to further the relationship between Japan and the US. Opening ceremonies in the Warner Theater involved entertainment and dignitaries from both countries while blossoms in the Tidal Basin were illustrating how the countries are linked by a spectacular natural wonder.

In the same spirit, a few years ago, thanks to connections through the IFEA, we celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice with a partnership between JinJu, Korea and Ottawa's Winterlude. It may be a coincidence, but a few months later, South Korea signed a free trade agreement with Canada!

As we are preparing to celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary of

Confederation, we extended an invitation to Embassies located in Canada's Capital to celebrate their National Days out of Lansdowne Park by offering free access to municipal buildings. As a result of this brilliant idea by our Mayor, Jim Watson, we will have over 25 Embassies celebrating Canadian diversity as they present a free showcase of their culture.

In summary... as major festivals and events experts, we are more than just someone who organizes 'big parties'... we are diplomatic experts and extensions of our country's foreign trade policy!.

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