

# initiatives

## Innovation Happens in Manitoba

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: ART AND THE INTERNET

#### SEPTEMBER, 2002 – ST. NORBERT, MB –

"Right now we have visiting artists from Africa and Uganda, and they use our computers every day to keep in touch with their families."

Marie Bouchard, Executive Director of the St. Norbert Arts Centre (SNAC) is well informed on art and artists. Bouchard, whose professional training is as an art historian, says that diverse forms of artistic expression are welcome. In recent months she has seen how the Internet plays a role in every field of artistic expression. This non-profit centre has seven computers with Internet connections, two of which are dedicated to public access, Monday-Friday, from 11 a.m. to five in the afternoon. The St. Norbert Arts Centre is a sterling example of imaginative reclamation.

Twenty years ago this was the location of a Trappist monastery. When the monks relocated, the property reverted to the municipality. A local group developed the property as a cultural centre, and after a \$1 million renovation, the centre came to life. SNAC is dedicated to investigations of cultural expression and to developing the relationship between artists and the diverse communities to provide for positive societal growth.

The SNAC includes rooms large and small for group or individual instruction. There is a residence that can house 11 artists at a time in private accommodation. There are private multimedia studios equipped with top-level iMac computers and high-speed Internet connections. The computer in one of the studios is equipped with two monitors and is used for instruction in Photoshop work. Visiting artists may store their work-in-progress by burning it into a CD. One of the iMac computers can be connected to a Sony LCD projector for group viewing.

One recent visitor was Joanne Pratt of the Wild Rehabilitation Centre, a non-profit

agency that nurses injured birds and animals back to health. She used SNAC computers, scanners, Photoshop, and printers to design and produce a series of overhead transparencies. They constitute an educational program for classroom use.

Plans for the future include: adding a video-editing suite for visiting artists as well as community use; a music-and-audio editing studio; and expansion of the Community Connections Internet usage in partnership with area school divisions. The goal is to use a virtual private network in order to conduct art workshops for school classes.

Six visiting artists from across Canada attended a weeklong workshop on the subject of 'Canadian Black Art and Culture.' A group of Aboriginal students from the North attended a six-day course where they were taught how to use the Internet to find the appropriate graphics they needed to make their videos and burn CD's. "I believe that every artist who visits us uses the Internet in some phase of their work." (You've heard of artists suffering for their art? Well, those young students from the North endured a 14-hour auto trip over winter roads across frozen lakes and rivers to get their instruction.)

One current visitor-in-residence is the exceptional young composer from Ottawa, Barbara Croall. She was commissioned to write the anthem for the 2002 Indigenous Games. She is also composing an original score for a music-theatrical performance titled "The Meeting Point of the Seven," based upon the seven Anishinabe teachings, which opened at SNAC in August 2002.

Everything about SNAC is artistic. On the property is the shell of a burned-out monastery building, now known as The Ruins. This became the basis of the SNAC address, 100 rue des Ruins du Monastere.

Industry, Trade and Mines  
[www.gov.mb.ca/itm](http://www.gov.mb.ca/itm)

Innovation Happens in Manitoba  
[www.gov.mb.ca/itm/rii/ihm](http://www.gov.mb.ca/itm/rii/ihm)