



**International Fiscal Association (Canadian Branch)
Association fiscale internationale (Section canadienne)
President's Greeting
2013 Annual General Meeting, May 24, 2013**



Let me begin by first thanking each of you for attending this year's seminar.

It has been another successful event here in Montreal with almost 240 people registered.

My sincere thanks go out to our co-chairs, Brian Bloom and Ken Battenham, for their many hours of planning, meetings and phone calls to help make this happen.

I know Brian and Ken would be the first to mention the assistance they received from Elizabeth Hooper and her team at Events Management, in particular Heather Dow and Heather Wagner as well as the behind the scenes counsel and support of Robert Raizenne and Brian Mustard.

We had a couple of firsts at this year's seminar. For the first time, all the speakers had their materials available a whole week before the seminar. Now, that may be a first for any tax seminar or conference!!

A big thank you is owed to our speakers for this, but also and, more importantly, for their time and commitment to making the seminar a success. And thank you to our moderators for being so engaged and for organizing the panel discussions.

The second first is that all of materials for the seminar are available on our "app" for everyone to access from their mobile device. About a third of the seminar registrants still asked for the binder. I am going to attribute that to scepticism about whether the app would work properly the first time. But, next year there will be no excuse and we will want even fewer people requesting a binder!!

We are grateful to Larry Chapman and the Canadian Tax Foundation for sharing their experience with their own app that has worked marvellously at the last two CTF annual conferences. And also to Heather Dow of Events Management for the time she spent tailoring and developing our app to today's seminar.

It was our first effort and we welcome your suggestions for improvements for the upcoming lectureship this fall and next year's joint seminar with the US Branch.

I also want to thank Bill Robson of the C.D. Howe Institute for his luncheon address yesterday on a topic that is particularly relevant to all Canadians in the current economic environment.

Finally, I congratulate Helmut Birk for accepting our Honorary Member award.

An organization, such as IFA, relies on the good work and commitment of many in order to carry out its goal and objectives successfully. I, and I know everyone else on council, have found our task to be much easier thanks for the hard work and dedication of our predecessors and senior members, like Helmut, who have helped establish the IFA tradition in Canada.

It is a tradition we are committed to making stronger.

As President, it is my pleasure to lead an executive and council that is enthusiastic and dedicated to enhancing the profile and good work of IFA Canada in the study and advancement of international tax. It has been my goal to put that goodwill to good use as best we can.

To do this end, five committees were created within council. The objectives and members of each committee are described in the members' section of the website.

The committees are: Research, Communication, Events, Governance, and Finance, and they involve all members of council.

One of our goals has been to engage our members on a more regular basis. We have sought to do this through webinars, newsletters and quarterly President's Reports as well as email notices of recent developments on our redesigned and upgraded website. Please make a point of visiting the website on a regular basis at www.ifacanada.org.

Also, we are conscious that as a national organization, we should have national representation and seek to hold more of our activities across the country. To this end, in a few moments we will be asking members to approve our new council for 2013/2014, which includes 7 new members, 5 of whom are from Calgary and Vancouver.

Our next seminar is a planned joint seminar with the US IFA Branch in Toronto in May 2014. However, our 2015 seminar will take place in Calgary.

Finally, our popular travelling lectureship series returns this fall. The lectureship, as in the recent past, will take place in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Plus, this year a sixth city has been added: Halifax, where the lectureship will be hosted by the Dalhousie Law School.

As a reminder, this year's lectureship is being presented by Stephen Richardson, former Associate Deputy Minister of Finance. The dates and details of the lectureship are on the website.

Aligned with our goals of engaging more with members and taking on a more national focus is having an eye to the future by helping to renew and reinvigorate our membership by attracting younger practitioners. We are doing this primarily through our Young IFA Network or YIN, under the current leadership of Michael Kandev.

To date, YIN activities have included webinars and an outreach to various universities – for example, our recent donation to 20 law and business schools of the new publication, *Essays on Tax Treaties: A Tribute to David A. Ward*.

Look for more YIN developments from our YIN Committee in the future.

Financially, you will see from our financial statements that the Canadian Branch remains very strong. This will serve us well in our continual study and advancement of international tax in Canada. It has allowed us to pursue the new initiatives I just spoke about and others, among those, Brian Mustard and the Communications Committee are considering how best to archive the past papers and proceedings of our seminars – you will be hearing more about this in the near future.

So, as you can see what I have just mentioned as well as from my quarterly President's Reports, much has happened and more is planned.

There has been one disappointment, however: Our planned joint seminar in Copenhagen with the UK Branch had to be cancelled. The timing of this year's IFA Congress being in late summer was making it problematic in getting speakers and being satisfied that we would get adequate attendance.

Disappointing as that is, we will continue to pursue joint meetings with other branches, in addition to the upcoming seminar, as I mentioned, next May with the US Branch.

As a final note of thanks, I want to thank Larry Chapman and the Canadian Tax Foundation. IFA and CTF has collaborated and supported each other for years and we will continue to do so in the future, for example, through our respective YIN and Young Practitioners Group.

In closing, due to a bit of quirk in our governance, while the mandate of the current executive still has 6 months left, this is the last time that I will address you as President.

It has been and is a privilege to be President of the Canadian IFA Branch.

I want to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues on council and, in particular, those on the executive for their support and advice over the last 18 months and to all members for giving me the opportunity to serve.

Thank you.

Nick Pantaleo, FCA
President

