



## LEADERSHIP: A WORD WORTH RELEARNING

JEAN LANDRY, AAPQ

It is 6:30 or 7 am, a morning like many others. Newspaper open, coffee mug in hand, you are scanning the headlines: the stock market has had an unexpected upturn/downturn, your favorite sports team has won/lost yet another crucial/unimportant game, and another great leader has just come out of nowhere to save us or has fallen into disgrace due to actions so stupid you wonder how he could have gained such influence in the first place. What were we all thinking when we gave our trust to someone clearly too perfect to be for real?

Maybe our unreasonable quest for a “total saviour,” a kind of omniscient silver bullet, makes us forget the fundamentals of prudence and good sense that require us, professionals or not, to assess the risks before engaging our preciously scarce resources. Maybe we are ready to believe, more than it is generally accepted, in miracles, magical actions freed from the rules of the ordinary world, one that is too logical and restrictive.

Finally, maybe we have simply forgotten the simple message found in Frédéric Back’s animated short “The Man Who Planted Trees;” the simple story of a man entirely dedicated to the principles he holds as sacred: respect for mankind and the world he lives in. Maybe the resiliency found in his daily actions makes this seemingly ordinary character a great leader by example. Maybe if you look more closely, you’ll recognize someone you know. Someone who gets results – not always spectacular, but surprising and unexpected results. Maybe being a leader doesn’t necessarily mean being a superhero...

Jean Landry, who was a City of Montréal landscape architect for more than 30 years, met Frédéric Back when he was mandated to install a plaque in his name, beside a tree of his choosing, in front of Back’s house on Montréal’s Kent Street. It was, says Jean, “a humbling opportunity.” [landryjean@videotron.ca](mailto:landryjean@videotron.ca)

## iceQuarium

PETER BRIGGS, NWTALA

Designing for a northern city centers on the balance between the mundane (snow storage) and the profound (all-season beauty). When asked to participate in FREEZE ([www.freezeproject.org](http://www.freezeproject.org)), a January celebration of Alaska and life in the North, Jonny Hayes and I became the sole landscape architects among teams of artists, architects and designers from Alaska and around the world. We came together to create large-scale outdoor installations using snow, ice and light – distinctly northern elements. Our installation in front of the Anchorage Museum needed to involve youth. Taking five 2’x4’x8’ blocks of crystal clear ice, we blended our design and technical skills with children’s art, a process made possible by a level of (im)maturity that allows us to identify closely with children. Our child artists created drawings of icy tropical creatures. These were frozen into the piece, to become an iceQuarium: “Come dabble in a paddle through the tropical ice.”

In the North, it pays to be prepared. We installed our piece during -25°C weather, learning how to craft ice with chisels, chainsaw, router, grinder, torch and warm boots. The day after we completed it, the weather warmed to +10°C. While other installations using snow began to degrade, ours became crystal clear. Through the warm weather, the iceQuarium slowly morphed into new and beautiful forms. Lit with colour-changing LEDs, the sculpture was a star attraction during people’s morning commutes. For museum visitors, it was a showcase for children’s imaginings. And for landscape architects, it was a fun way to introduce people to some of what we do.

**Peter Briggs has offered short courses to people less familiar with the science of snow and ice (i.e., Physics of Snow 101 — Trajectory, Snow Chemistry 310 — Moisture and Compaction, and Snow Medicine 421 — Healing Effects of Snow Down the Back). [pbriggs@corvus-design.com](mailto:pbriggs@corvus-design.com)**

PHOTO PETER BRIGGS

