Fellow’s Dinner:

**André Préfontaine, President and Publisher of Canadian Geographic**

Bonsoir Mesdames et Messieurs,

Good evening, mon nom est André Préfontaine et je suis le Président et Éditeur de Canadian Geographic. C’est un plaisir pour moi de vous présenter l’explorateur et aventurier George Kourounis qui agira à titre de maître de cérémonie ce soir.

It is my pleasant task to get the evening’s proceedings under way but, before I do so, I want to make it perfectly clear that it is not a requirement of the Society that guests have to walk through the “Doorway to Hell” and into a flaming gas crater before they can attend the Annual Dinner.

However, that is exactly what George Kourounis, our master of ceremony for this evening, has done.

George came back only yesterday from Turkmenistan where he went to explore the fiery Darvaza Crater which, George tells me, has been burning for the last 40 years.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming well-known explorer, adventurer, TV personality and Society Fellow George Kourounis - and please forgive him if there’s a lingering smell of smoke. George.

**George Kourounis, Master of Ceremonies**

Prime Minister Harper and Mrs. Harper

Members of the House of Commons and of the Senate

High Commissioner and Ambassadors

Fellows and Friends of the Society.

I’m not sure that you know how good -- and how much cooler -- its feels to be here.
tonight as your master of ceremony.

It took me nearly a year to prepare for the exploration of the Darvaza Crater and I have to say that this has been, by far, the most complicated expedition I’ve ever undertaken.

Just imagine, me dressed up in my heat resistant suit, dangling over a cauldron of burning gasses from what, I hoped, was a very flame resistant rope, ready to become the first person to drop down amid the flames and set foot on the bottom of the crater.

Luckily I made it back in one piece, as did the Society’s expedition flag which I had with me, and which, tonight, I proudly return -- although I will beg your forgiveness if it’s slightly singed around the edges.

May I now ask Paul Ruest, the President of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, to join me on stage.

Paul, never underestimate how pleased I am to be here tonight and to return this expedition flag to you.

**John Geiger, CEO, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society:**

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society has a long tradition of electing the country’s first minister to join its College of Fellows. This practice began with R.B. Bennett and W.L. Mackenzie King, and has included other Prime Ministers, such as Louis St. Laurent and more recently Lester B. Pearson. It is a great honour to have Prime Minister Harper and Mrs Harper with us this evening, and I would like to invite you both to join President Paul Ruest on stage.

Prime Minister, your interest in Canada’s Arctic and matters of northern
sovereignty, your government’s establishment of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station, a facility that promises to be a global centre for research in Arctic science, technology, and innovation, coupled with your commitment to geographic learning, particularly through your government’s support for the national commemoration of key moments in the development of Canada, are just a few of the accomplishments that underlie this recognition.

Mrs. Harper, your interest in back-country trekking, such as undertaking a long-range traverse of Gros Morne National Park and retracing the steps of Laura Secord’s heroic 32-km. walk, and your work with the Trans-Canada Trail to assist in its completion before Canada’s 150th anniversary, demonstrate a commitment to fulfilling the Society mandate to ‘make Canada better known.’

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society is pleased to welcome you into its College of Fellows as Honorary Fellows.

**Paul Ruest, President of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society:**

Prime Minister Harper and Mrs. Harper, it is a distinct honour to have both of you with us tonight and it is with the greatest of pleasure that I welcome you to the Society’s College of Fellows.

Your presence here tonight greatly enhances the evening and encourages us to continue the society’s vital work.

Thank you.

Members of the Board of Governors of the Society Fellows and Friends of the Society Distinguished guests,
C'est un véritable plaisir pour moi de vous voir si nombreux et de vous souhaiter la bienvenue au Dîner annuel du Collège des Fellows.

For us, the Annual Dinner is an evening of celebration – a celebration of commitment and dedication to this great country of ours, a celebration of fellowship and, of course, a celebration of geography.

That is why I am extremely happy that a number of distinguished guests and friends are here with us tonight. Just a few moments ago, we had the pleasure of welcoming Prime Minister Harper and Mrs. Harper to the College of Fellows as Honorary Fellows.

Plus tôt dans la soirée, nous avons également eu le privilège d’accueillir Son Excellence, David Johnston, Gouverneur Général du Canada et Patron d’honneur de la Société, qui a présidé à la cérémonie de remise des médailles.

Now, I would like to extend the warmest welcome to:

Their Excellencies

Howard Drake, British High Commissioner to Canada
Werner Wnendt, German Ambassador to Canada, and
Niels Boel Abrahamsen, Ambassador of Denmark.

It is a distinct pleasure to have you with us tonight.

In the pursuit of its mandate of "making Canada better known to Canadians and the world", the Society works in close partnership with many organizations that have shared values and common objectives. A number of the Society’s partners are with us tonight and I would like to recognize them:
Meg Beckel, President and CEO, Canadian Museum of Nature

Bob Bleaney, Vice-President, External Relations, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

Geordie Dalglish, Chair of the W. Garfield Weston Foundation

Robert Hornung, President, Canadian Wind Energy Association

David Lindsay, President and CEO, Forest Products Association of Canada

Bruce Lourie, President, Ivey Foundation

Élise Maheu, Director, Government Affairs, 3M Canada

John Rhind, Vice-President, Operations, Heavy Oil, Shell Canada

David Scott, Executive Director, Canadian Polar Commission

I would also like to acknowledge a few of our distinguished guests who are with us tonight:

Linda Thom, Gold Medal winner in the sport pistol event at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and Fellow of the Society

Roger Tomlinson, inventor of GIS and father of the Canadian Geographic Information System.

Admiral Paul Maddison, former Commander, Royal Canadian Navy and
Christine Simpson, Vice-President and General Manager, CDS Global Canada, the lead sponsor for tonight’s dinner.

Of course, I would be extremely remiss if I did not extend our warmest congratulations and deepest appreciation to Robert Bateman, 2013 RCGS Gold Medalist, member of the College of Fellows and tonight’s guest of honour and keynote speaker.

As I mentioned, the Society hosted a medal ceremony earlier this evening during which His Excellency, David Johnston, Governor General of Canada and Patron of the Society presented a number of medals and awards. For those of you who could not join us for the ceremony, please allow me to name the recipients:

Gérard Duhaime - prix de la recherche scientifique sur le Nord de la Commission canadienne des affaires polaires.

Anne Smith Mansfield - Canadian Geographic Education Geographic Literacy Award

Andre Young – Canadian Geographic Education Innovation in Teaching Geography Award

Jeff Golfman – 3M Environmental Innovation Award

David Hik – Martin Bergmann Medal for Northern Research and Leadership

Jill Heinerth - Sir Christopher Ondaatje Medal for Exploration

Mapping Information Branch, Earth Science Sector, Natural Resources Canada - Gold Medal

Robert Bateman - Gold Medal
David Ley - Massey Medal

Congratulations to our medal and awards recipients

This afternoon, at the Annual General Meeting of the College of Fellows, 118 new Fellows and 15 new Honorary Fellows were elected to the College of Fellows. Their names will appear on screen and I would ask those who are present here tonight to come on stage after the Dinner for a group photo.

To our new Fellows, welcome to the College of Fellows and, to all of you, welcome to the Annual Dinner of the College of Fellows. Have a most pleasant evening.

George Kourounis:

As Paul mentioned, earlier this evening, Mr. Jeff Golfman received the 2013 3M Environmental Innovation Award for the development of a new type of paper made from agricultural waste. For those of you who are not familiar with his work, we have a short video that will better acquaint you with Jeff and his impressive accomplishment.

The Fellows Dinner also serves as a fundraiser for the Society, so we are deeply appreciative of your support and encouragement because the proceeds of the evening go entirely to support the Society’s programs.

We have also had an overwhelming response from our business partners to sponsor the Dinner and you will see their logos on the screen during the evening, but I would like to thank them and welcome them to the Dinner.

CDS Global
The Globe and Mail
It has also become a tradition of the Dinner to feature a stunning silent auction that includes trips to far-off destinations, pieces of art and Inuit sculptures, jewelry and outdoor and photography equipment.

This year, the silent auction includes an expanded selection of items that will allow you to make the evening even more special. That is why I would like to mention a few of our partners whose contributions to the silent auction will entice you to bid often and bid high.

Adventure Canada
Canadian Mountain Holidays
Nahanni River Adventures
Maple Leaf Adventures
Anchor D Guiding and Outfitting
One Ocean Expeditions
The Royal Canadian Mint

The Silent Auction will remain open for bids until 8:45 and we will remind everyone at 8:15 that it’s time to go and increase your bids.

Please enjoy the evening
George Kourounis:

Robert Bateman was born in 1930 and grew up in Toronto. From his earliest days he has been keenly interested in both art and nature.

Although he was a high school teacher for 20 years he never considered art and nature as mere hobbies, but an integral part of his whole life.

By the mid-1970’s his art had attracted such an enormous following that he pursued it full time. Here are a few highlights of his career:

His paintings appear in the collections of many art museums as well as in those of Prince Philip and Prince Charles.

He has had a large number of museum shows of his work, the most spectacular of which drew record-breaking crowds at the Smithsonian Institution.

There are 6 major books on his life and work with millions of copies in print, a book of essays, Thinking Like a Mountain, & five award-winning children’s books. He has been the subject of several films & television shows.

His honours and awards are numerous and include Officer of the Order of Canada, the Order of British Columbia, the Rachel Carson Award, Human Rights Defender Award from Amnesty International, as well as 12 honorary doctorates from Canadian and American universities.

He has had 3 schools named after him: a public school in Ottawa, which he visited yesterday, and high schools in Burlington, ON and Abbotsford, BC.
The Bateman Centre, which opened May 2013 in Victoria, BC and is a gallery displaying his art and will also be a focus for environmental education, a catalyst for global sustainability and a centre for dialogue and discovery.

In 1957-58, Robert Bateman travelled around the world by Land Rover. He taught high school in Nigeria from 1963-65 and his first son was born there. He has 5 children and 8 grandchildren. He and his wife, Birgit, have lived on Salt Spring Island since 1985.

He is a Fellow of the Society and long-time conservationist and his support for conservation is widely known and respected.

Ladies and gentlemen, Robert Bateman.