

Destination: COMMON Annual Meeting and Exposition

By Gloria Seltzer

Did you know that guests of attendees are welcome at COMMON conferences under a special program known as the “COMMON Guest Program?” I have been taking advantage of this program for many years and I think it’s great! The Guest Pass is available for only \$175, and it enables me to attend the Opening Session, all iSocial events throughout the week, including the iSocial Main Event on Thursday evening, and the COMMON Expo.

Love at First Sight

My husband **Léo Lefebvre** went to his first COMMON conference in Toronto in 1989 and fell in love. COMMON is Leo’s mission and passion, his pride and joy. He has been going to COMMON ever since and always brings me along. My first COMMON conference was in Cincinnati in 1990. To him, I am like the American Express card. (He never leaves home without me!)

Out of his love for COMMON, grew his love for one of the local users groups: TUG (Toronto Users Group for System i.) He has been involved with TUG since 1989 and has served as its President more than once.

Land of the Free

COMMON is a great destination for an inexpensive vacation. With Léo’s airfare and accommodation paid by his company MBL3 (as a corporate expense), and some food paid by the sponsors of the conference and the expo, my most significant out-of-pocket cost is my own airfare, which I pay by air miles accumulated from our trips to the Far East. Over the years, I have visited many tourist destinations which hosted COMMON conferences, including Boston, Denver, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, and was never disappointed.

Live It Up

I have also met many interesting people with interesting jobs and hobbies through the COMMON Guest Program. I remember **Joyce Naylor** hosting the Guest Program, as well as recruiting volunteers for the Book Store in the early nineties. She put together a COMMON cook book and a poem about COMMON wives who endure lonely days and nights without their husbands who are hard at work learning or volunteering at the conferences. Things have changed a lot since then, as the independent and adventurous amongst us take sight seeing trips, and shop till we drop.

Learn from the Masters

I have attended sessions of award-winning speakers, including **Bob Tipton**, **Randall Munson**, and **Trevor Perry**. They not only taught me how to live and work, they also taught me how to have fun doing both. I enjoyed **Jim Sloan’s** Portrait of an Artist including **Michelangelo** and **Van Gogh**. I was repeatedly enchanted by their artistic world of color, beauty, and imagination.

Home of the Brave

Now that Léo is a director of COMMON, we go to the Annual Conference and the Fall Focus each year, as well as to Chicago twice a year for COMMON Board meetings. We always go one day ahead of the meetings so we can enjoy the city. I’ve grown to



Vaughn Dragland

Gloria Seltzer in Miami Beach


love Chicago the Windy City: its cleanliness, art, culture, attractions, and restaurants. Chicago looks like Toronto and feels like home. That’s the way it should be, for Chicago is the home office of COMMON, where the dedicated and fun loving HQ staff work under the leadership of the Board: to ensure the success of COMMON, to make COMMON relevant for its members, and to boldly go where COMMON has never gone before.

Rules of the Road

If you plan to purchase a COMMON Guest pass, please review the Guest Participation Policy below:

- To attend, a “Guest” must be registered as a guest of a fully paid attendee.
- Registered Guests must be 12 years of age or older.
- COMMON welcomes Guests to attend the conferences for a set fee and will provide a designated Guest hospitality area for them.
- Guests may attend sessions where their host attendee is a presenter.
- Guests may attend the COMMON Expo, Opening Session, and iSocial events.
- Attendance at any other session would require the specific approval of the Guest Program Coordinator in advance of a session, on a session-by-session basis.
- Guests may only submit requirements to general committees, i.e. non-projects.
- Guests are encouraged to participate in general volunteer activities, with the exception of Course of Study-specific requirements.

Hand in Hand

Unlike many attendees who miss their spouses while at conferences and meetings, Léo is extraordinary to share his life between his two loves. COMMON and I are truly blessed and we have cause for thanks. Quoting from COMMON President **Randy Dufault**: “Gloria is a fixture at COMMON. When I see Gloria, I know Léo is not far away.” 

About the Author

Gloria Seltzer holds Bachelor of Science and Master of Business Administration degrees from McGill University in Montreal, and a Certified Management Accountant designation. She has worked in IT for over 30 years, as a Business Analyst and a Project Manager. She can be reached at gloria.seltzer@bmo.com.