

CREATIVE RETIREMENT MANITOBA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I officially assumed the position of President in November 2020, I will be reporting for the period covering November 2020 to present. Despite the challenges, we experienced over this period related to COVID-19, I believe that we have fared well.

Starting in November we saw an initial and sizeable decrease in memberships. Refunds were issued because of in-person course cancellations. This was necessitated because of the restrictions imposed by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and COVID-19. We needed to consider different options to sustain our membership and continue to deliver quality learning events.

Despite concerns regarding our financial position, we have been able to remain solvent. We have done this because of returns from our Annual Appeal, raffle, variety of government grants and subsidies, personal donations, reduced rent, and significant savings by eliminating the publishing of the guide.

Over the past year we have experimented with different ideas for encouraging more participation in our programming. We offered more online learning events but there was hesitancy initially. It was decided that the easiest and most practical approach was to increase our membership fee to \$55 per year but to include a wide variety of free online classes to those members. So far, this has proven to be very popular, and our membership continues to grow.

As governance is the responsibility of the board it was decided to do a review of our current by law and policies. It was agreed that work on our bylaw be put on hold until a new slate of directors is in place. However, the Respectful Workplace Policy was assessed and updated to include definitions of harassment and the requirement for a scent free environment. This policy was approved on January 10, 2020, by the Board of Directors. More recently, the board approved a Confidentiality/Privacy Policy. We will continue to validate our current policies and to incorporate ones that are seen to be required.

As previously mentioned, we sought to increase our revenue and reduce costs. An important change was not to publish the program guide but to reassign dollars to advertisements in the Winnipeg Free Press and several community papers. In addition, we felt that it has become necessary to also make use of social media to increase CRM's exposure. We now have our own Facebook page.

In September our fall session began. Our members were notified at that time that in-person classes would not be held for the foreseeable future as public health orders would continue to be followed. We will review the situation if and when restrictions are lifted and protocols in place that allows for face-to-face meetings and classes to take place.

In addition, it is noteworthy that your board is very aware of the financial status of all levels of government and are likely looking at areas to reduce their deficits. We have been most fortunate to remain in a positive financial position, but we believe it would be remiss on our part not to consider the possibility of our traditional sources of funding to discontinue. It is necessary to look at our status to see where we may have to cut and where we might be able to improve our revenue stream. The board has considered several options and one major decision has been to adopt a satellite model. That means that we will be giving notice to the city to cancel our lease at the Valour Community Centre. This will result in further savings. Arrangements can readily be made to accommodate events and meetings at various locations throughout the city. Club leaders have been made aware of this decision.

The Executive Director has been actively seeking more collaborative arrangements with other like organizations such as local and rural senior centres as well as Indigenous groups. By offering a membership to these groups they can link to our various online lectures and classes that they would not otherwise have access to. In addition, when it becomes safe to do so we will make use of these partnerships to access their facilities for face-to-face interactions. As a side note our funders strongly support those organizations with common interests working together.

I am particularly grateful to our Executive Director who has demonstrated a creative problem-solving approach in these difficult times. With the full support of the board, she recommended and introduced effective solutions to the many challenges we have been confronted with during this pandemic.

In closing, I am confident that we remain in a good position moving forward.

Respectfully,

Patricia Jarrett, President