

# LADYSMITH MARITIME SOCIETY

## Managing Director's Report to the Board September 9, 2015

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..."*

I had forgotten most of the above piece by the *Bard* other than the first, often-quoted bit. It struck me how well the fuller quote summed up this past summer at LMS. It's perhaps a bit dramatic but, as most of you know, there has been no shortage of drama around the marina.

But what a summer...remarkable weather, throngs of visitors, much food and drink and the best, absolutely the best volunteers in the WORLD all added up to an incredible experience and the experience continues. I am not going to try to capture all of what has happened since last June – just some of the highlights (and lowlights).

### **HOSTS**

My gosh....thank you Cecilia and the entire HOSTS team for a stellar job. It is because of you that we are known as the friendliest marina on the west coast. The comments are fantastic from visitors and staff and I can say personally it is just fun to have you around. You add life to the marina and create a personality that transcends any of our shortcomings. Thank you John Bucchiere, Pauline Byrne, Marlene Cathers, Bob Cross, Terry Davies, Gerald Fitzgerald, Robin Francis, Sonny Hockey, Rob Johnson, Barry Jones, Emily Mikulski, Alan Newell, Betty Pearson, Traci-Lei Pritchard, Rob Pinkerton, Graham Seal Jones, Carol Sparham, Trudy Talbot, Michael Waage and of course Cecilia Grimstead. I also want to thank all the members who are not "officially" part of the HOSTS program but who jumped in to help land boats or just make people feel welcome. Thank you all so much.

### **651**

Fires, wrecks, sinkings, protests, thefts, shouting matches, oil leaks, floating garbage, confrontations in the Welcome Centre...I can now say without hesitation that dealing with the goings on in 651 takes up over 30% of all staff time. I have had many days this summer where it took up 100% of my time engaging with the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, the Town of Ladysmith, our local and Nanaimo RCMP, private security companies, lawyers, individuals from 651, media interviews, members with concerns, visitors with concerns, politicians...What once was a strategic opportunity (management of 651) has now, by default, become an operational reality!

There is no greater operational concern for LMS than activities associated with vessels in and individuals from 651. One of three things will happen in the next year: there will be an environmental disaster seriously interrupting LMS activities; there will be a major fire with the potential to wipe out all you have created or someone will be killed or seriously injured. I wouldn't rule out all three things happening. Our reputation is on the line daily. The friendliest marina on the west coast is gaining a by-line "too bad it's next to that mess" or "too bad it's in the harbour with the greatest number of derelict vessels in the islands" or "yes but I'm not going to bring my expensive boat in next to that floating garbage."

Rob Pinkerton, as a concerned citizen, has shown some real leadership on this file (specifically around Viki Lyne II) and Take5 and the Chronicle have provided in depth coverage but more needs to be done. There has been no change in the status of the Viki Lyne II, other than the addition of a cancer clinic on board. There are rumours that a second cleanup will take place but nothing yet. The way forward on 651 is for the Town and SFN to jointly apply for a water lot lease. I imagine they would be given a license of occupancy and a year or so to come up with a management plan which could involve LMS. With a lease in place the Town could establish zoning and bylaws which would allow for enforcement. Whoever takes on the management of 651 would also have to be prepared to deal with derelict vessels and the current residents of 651. There are some good people there, some good friends of LMS, but there are also some folks with issues and certainly a criminal element – resident and transient. This is not simple but it can be done. It is going to take a team approach to make it happen.

In the meantime LMS will have to staff for effective coverage and look at increased security in the marina and on land. We will need to consider this during the budget process.

## Visitors

	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>
Budget	2251	3823	9516	16840	21606
<b>Actual</b>	<b>2864</b>	<b>4765</b>	<b>13519</b>	<b>21079</b>	<b>24108</b>

Visitors, visitors, visitors....While the above numbers are revenue numbers they provide a good measure of the increase in visitor numbers. I am not sure what we would have done without our dedicated HOSTS and some vacant annual moorer's spots. July and August were just crazy busy. I want to thank Marc and Debbie for managing this busy time so well and doing it with the kind of friendly service people have come to expect from LMS. Overall it looks like 2014/15 will show a 12% to 15% increase in visitor numbers.

## Food Service

With all these visitors around, as you might expect, the Café and Dine on the Docks were pretty busy. Dine on the Docks sold out almost every night and a number of the nights we increased ticketed meals from 85 to 100 to handle the demand. It was nice to see some of the visiting boaters, both singles and rendezvous, taking advantage of these offerings. You could tell who was a visiting boater – they brought their own plates and cutlery ☺. Most of the catering was handled by *In The Beantime* and *The Fox & Hound* and they are both keen to come back.

Trudy and Michel were kept very busy with a number of record breaking sales days. The comments in the guest book are spectacular. I suggest you take a peek. While the Café will close the end of September we are hoping to bring back some special offerings in the fall and winter including a Sunday, open to the public, chili and football series. Stay tuned.

By the way, seems the boats on the visitor dock were a little bigger this year. Did you get to see this 37m beauty? When does a boat become a ship? I think they ate on board 😊



## **Other Stuff**

August 31<sup>st</sup> we said good bye to Jennika Erickson, Shirley's museum assistant. She was a delight to have around and did a great job meeting people of all ages and representing LMS. Good Luck in your next adventure Jennika.

Neils Weise continues to lead the charge in our Clean Marine BC program. He's working on a draft of our environmental stewardship plan which we hope to have ready around February. Right now he is on the hunt for a horse watering trough. Maybe we are replacing the golf cart with a horse??

We continue to work with the Town on a number of fronts. We asked for and got a fire inspection from the Fire Chief. He had a number of recommendations which we are implementing but in general he was pleased with our operation. There's nothing much new to report on the Expo building. John Marston is still in the kayak shop area. The train will be moving into the big yellow building for refurbishing. The floor downstairs from our office has collapsed and cracked. The building inspector was by and they are developing a plan. Some signage has been installed in an attempt to slow traffic. I expect the lower parking lot will receive signage this fall. I have been talking to the Town and the Gallery about a new sign on Transfer Beach Rd.

We received \$800 in sponsorship from our insurance company towards the purchase of the new wheel barrows. Our gaming grant was approved in the amount of \$17,255 – funds to be used for heritage/museum activities and festivals.

The boom sticks down the south side of our water lot seem to be doing their job. Thanks to Harr, Bob and others for their hard work. Boom sticks will be installed on the north side of the lot as soon as we can come up with cable and anchors.

Priorities over the next couple of months: Year-end; safety committee meeting; 2015/16 budget; marina maintenance and development plan; staffing plan; volunteer recognition event (2<sup>nd</sup> week of October); membership meeting; Festivals planning; 651 action plan; funding opportunities pipeline development...

Thank you to everyone who volunteered this summer, including staff. It's because of you that this place is special.

Rod