

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE DECEMBER 7, 2016 AGM**

I want to start tonight by recognizing that we are in the traditional territory of Stz'uminus First Nation. More about that later...

### **It has been a good year at LMS:**

Moorage contract renewals went well and we were full again with about 45 people confirmed on the annual moorage wait list.

### **Our Festivals saw record numbers of smiling faces – young and old.**

Dine on the Docks was a smashing success with every evening selling out. Our new tent proved to be a welcomed addition.

### **The folks from *In the Beantime* did a great job operating the Oyster Bay Café. Food reviews in the guest book are very positive.**

Marine visitor numbers were up again this year with a big thank you to those of you who gave up your slip so we could accommodate all these folks.

### **Our harbour tours team was kept very busy this season with the regular tours and accommodating the children who visited our site through our harbour heritage education program which now includes the sea life viewing station and of course our award winning floating museum and the Harbour Heritage Centre.**

The Purple Martins were back but unfortunately the weather did not cooperate during the nesting season and hatchings were down.

**And the disabled sailing program was well used throughout the summer.**

Great job done by our marina staff: Marc and Debbie with help from Brian, Shane, Jack and AJ – AJ and Jack both from Stz'uminus First Nation.

**None of this would have happened if we didn't have the strong support from our volunteers – many of you in this room, including the Society's Board of Directors. I made the mistake of naming names last year and it was pointed out to me that I missed some people. So not this year but if you have any doubt that I appreciate your volunteer support – come up to me and ask me – it will be a good excuse for me to give you a hug.**

And to the community – a big thank you for your help in getting rid of the Viki Lyne II. There is no doubt that this community can accomplish great things when it comes together.

**A brief look ahead:**

Obviously there is more to do in cleaning up the coast's derelict vessel problem. I remain active in the area of developing options for the government to consider and will continue to pursue a comprehensive solution for our harbour.

**We are progressing in the development of the Ladysmith Community Marina Paddling Centre and expect to see the doors opened by July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year**

This summer, working with an experienced operator, we will introduce a suite of excursion packages for marine visitors and the community:

packages that will include wine tours, culinary tours, hiking and kayaking expeditions and more. It is hoped that this new suite of offerings will encourage boaters to stay at the marina for another night or two so they can explore all Ladysmith and area has to offer.

**We will also introduce expanded programming of the Welcome Centre which will see the place busy seven days a week. If anyone is interested in helping me with this, come see me – could be fun.**

And our digital marketing program continues to grow with a leap to the number of people on mobile devices viewing our site – now accounting for 52% of traffic. I am looking to develop a volunteer social media team so come and see me if Facebook or Instagram excites you.

**Probably the greatest opportunity for us and the community is the development and implementation of a new waterfront plan. I know the old one didn't go anywhere but that's because, in my opinion, it was the wrong plan.**

Consider how this new plan is positioned on the Town's web site:

"The Town of Ladysmith and the Stz'uminus First Nation are working in partnership to develop a plan for the Ladysmith Waterfront Area, in the spirit of reconciliation.

We have made great strides with Transfer Beach Park and the LMS Community Marina."

**Two things here: in partnership with Stz'uminus First Nation (that's very different from the first plan) and obviously the Town is proud of our little marina operation. Consider the following:**

Support from Stz'uminus First Nation was key in getting the funding for this building. Their letter of support carried a substantial amount of weight with funders.

I believe when Chief John Elliot and Mayor Aaron Stone jointly signed a request to have the Viki Lyne II removed from our harbour and the community showed its commitment to that goal we were on our way to success.

Over the next few months, thanks to the efforts of Shirley Blackstaff working with the educational staff at Stz'uminus First Nation, a book depicting the life of the Purple Martin written by our own Jennika Erickson, will be translated into Hul'qumi'num for use in elementary schools in the area, with more publications to follow.

Over the past year Stz'uminus has used our Welcome Centre facilities for meetings and celebrations (like the John Marston BC Ferries event) and there are more booked for this year.

And we continue to engage with senior members of their team.

My point is that with the Town pointing to our Community Marina as a success and the current and developing relationship we have with Stz'uminus First Nation, LMS is well positioned to play a significant role in the development and implementation of the new waterfront plan.

As individuals and as an organization we have the opportunity to influence the development of the overall waterfront plan but arguably, as an organization, our greatest opportunity is with water lot 651. Something will happen there and it will happen with or without the blessing of Stz'uminus First Nation. The Province has made that clear.

I am very proud of what this community (which includes the Stz'uminus First Nation) was able to accomplish with the Viki Lyne II. I look forward to serving you again this year as we enter into the next chapter of the LMS story – a chapter I believe is full of promise and adventure.

Thank you.