

## 28th Annual General Meeting of LMS

### President's Report

This is the 28th Annual General Meeting of LMS and we have had yet another banner year.

For that, and on behalf of myself and all of our members, I would like to thank:

1. Our dedicated staff - Tom, Mark, Paul, Marcus Daniels, Debbie Williams, Debbie Loewen, Annette, and Jamie.
2. Our volunteer Board of Directors; and
3. The countless other volunteers -

all of whom helped make big things happen across the broad range of LMS activities - from the marina, including the harbour tours and food services, to the Museum, to heritage vessels, to the shop, to the festivals and to the office. To the staff and volunteers, LMS owes you its gratitude for a great year and for helping to make this organization what it is today.

We will be hearing about these activities in the Committee Reports later on the agenda so I won't steal the thunder here.

Following the recent restructuring of staff positions, a search was conducted for a Business Manager. That search was successful. I have the pleasure of introducing tonight our new Business Manager - Rod Smith. Rod's role will combine all non-marina financial and business matters, running the office, internal communications, external relationships, volunteer relationships, and marketing beyond the scope of marina operations. Rod and his wife and family have been residents of Saltair for the past 13 years. Rod joins us after more than 25 years in senior roles in non-profit organizations. He expects to complete the transition to LMS from his current employer within the next couple of weeks. The Board is delighted to have Rod joining us. Please introduce yourselves to Rod when you have a chance tonight.

Do we have our issues in LMS? - yes we do. But let us stand back and see that by working together we are creating something that is very unique and special of which we and the community can be very proud. We have accomplished much but we are not finished yet.

Just look at where we are today compared to 6-7 years ago:

- Tenure - Only five years ago our tenure on the water lot was month-to-month - there was no point in upgrading our facilities, even local boaters hardly knew we were here, our facilities were run down, we were an insular lot, support from the Town was weak, and proposals for commercial upland development posed a very real threat to the continued existence of LMS. We now have secure long term tenure that has provided a foundation from which we can grow and implement a purposeful vision.

- Economic Benefits for the Town and Region - Knowing we were here for the long term has allowed us to advertise widely and to upgrade facilities, some of which are without question the finest on the Coast. This has increased the number of visitor boats from 150 in 2007 to almost 1400 in 2013 - a ten-fold increase at a time when the economy was weak! In 2013 these boaters spent almost \$500,000 on First Avenue. With our own spending, this puts the direct economic benefit to Ladysmith in 2013 at over \$800,000. The regional impact is \$1.5 million. Per year. This is well recognized by the community, and support for our programs from the Town is strong.
- Community Building - We are privileged to occupy prime real estate on the community's front yard. And we have taken important steps to welcome residents of the community down here to enjoy their own waterfront - from secure mini-mesh decking, to Annette's work with banners and beautification initiatives, to washrooms, food services, dine-on-the-docks events, hospitality, and no gates.

But our community is both sides of the harbour. Our efforts to welcome members of the Stz'uminus First Nation (SFN) to this side of the harbour are bearing fruit and are deeply appreciated by the SFN. We have been told that LMS was the first group to have ever invited the Chief and Band Council to an event on this side of the harbour. Our hiring of one or more summer students each year from SFN to work in the marina has given them confidence to go on to substantial careers. Our recent facilities upgrade, including the Welcome Centre, was made possible in no small part by support from the SFN. The SFN is an important part of the unique culture of our harbour and continuing to build trust is an important element in moving the community forward.

That is a lot of change in 6-7 years. During this time period a number of things were going on:

- We had the windstorm in 2008 and the disastrous fire three years ago. Both took much effort to repair facilities and deal with insurance and legal issues.
- Our annual revenues have grown to be in excess of \$500,000.
- The number of paid staff has increased from one in 2007 to about four FTE today.
- Moorage rates have increased but not at all in proportion to the improvements to the Marina and are significantly lower than full commercial rates in the harbour.

The depth and pace of change has placed a lot of stress on the organization. The level of activity across LMS has reached a point where I seriously question whether it can be sustained. Just this past year, in addition to four FTE staff, volunteers contributed 20,000 hours of their time. Key volunteers are close to burnout. I believe we need a bit of a breather before taking on more heroic projects, time to consolidate, time to step back and bring our processes and the quality of our communications up to where they need to be. We have to restore the fun.

But nor can we afford to stand still. Next year, and the next five years, hold opportunities for us to further our goals and provide leadership to the community on the water front:

- We already have 'K-Mart density parking' in our marina. Our ability to expand the number of marine visitors depends on extension of 'B' dock, finding ways to increase the number of visitors in the shoulder seasons of June and September, and a better system of making temporarily vacant contract slips available to visitors.

I am pleased to be able to announce tonight that LMS has just been awarded funding in the amount of \$21,600 to be applied to a 150' extension of 'B' dock in the first quarter of 2014. This is a \$65,000 project and LMS will provide the balance. There will be a three-year payout for LMS through moorage fees, but benefit to the Town through direct spending of new visitors on First Avenue will exceed total project cost every year starting in 2014. Our thanks for leading this initiative go to Tom Irwin and Doug Bell.

- The next big step in the marina may come with development of DL 651. LMS is not a leader here, but discussions are underway amongst various parties. It is quite possible that LMS would be asked to play a key role through management of a larger operation and/or through use of our facilities to access development there.
- The Town is having public discussions later this winter on the waterfront portion of the Official Community Plan. It is an opportunity for us to participate and put our ideas and vision into the process. There are issues such as signage that will bring people down to the waterfront, access between the Town and the waterfront, quality and location of roads, use of Town buildings and outdoor space, parking, and a second egress from our parking lot.
- Heritage activities have been part of LMS from the start and provided the core justification for LMS becoming a registered charity. Maritime heritage is an interest that has brought many members into LMS. The Society benefits from its charitable designation, both in moorage fees and access to donations. This status is put at risk if the size of our marina business is allowed to totally overwhelm our heritage programs. From an economic benefit perspective, stronger programs from the shop, heritage vessels, and the Museum will increase the numbers of land-based tourists coming to the community, and will increase the participation of residents on the waterfront. So for a number of reasons, I think LMS should give serious consideration to strengthening its heritage programs and the prominence of maritime heritage in the community.

In closing, I am encouraged to see so many candidates stepping forward to join the Board and be a part of directing LMS in the years ahead. I look forward to tonight's election.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barrie McDonald