

The Vancouver Life Drawing Society

AGM 2022 President's Report

As we head forward into our AGM we can all hopefully take cautious optimism that the pandemic that has gripped the world for the last two years is finally reaching the status of endemic. With the relaxing of Provincial Covid mandates so has Basic Inquiry. On April 8, 2022 we ended vaccine passports and mandatory masking. Aspects of our Safety Plan continue to be in affect mainly limited studio seating to prevent uncomfortable over crowding. A volunteer cleaning crew was organized last month to address studio hygiene concerns.

Presently we are running six sessions a week and with the updating of the Session Managers Handbook we hope to recruit more volunteers to run more sessions. The studio is back to covering its costs and the future looks brighter. The Board has already started engaging the City in discussions about renewing our rental lease at 1011 Main Street; which expires September 1, 2022. But what a trip the last year has been to get to this point.

A brief summary of the past 11 months is as follows:

May 16, 2021 at our last AGM Robostrar was launched. This is our current on-line registration system for sessions and memberships. A home grown system designed and engineered by Nick Jackiw, it has been a life saver for the Society. It continues to serve us reliably with Nick continually adding features and trouble shooting system "bugs" to keep the system operating smoothly. The Board was so impressed with Nick's tireless and enthusiastic commitment to designing software for the Society (Robobooker and Basic Inquiry On-line (BIO) being two other systems Nick created) it was compelled to award him with an honorarium in recognition of his "above and beyond the call of duty" service.

At the time of the AGM the studio was still closed so sales were for memberships; at the reduced price of \$30. The first meeting of the new Board on June 16, 2021 it was decided on June 29, 2021 the studio would resume operations with three sessions; Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Previously purchased paper tickets could be exchanged for electronic session tickets, membership was held at \$30 through the summer and a new session pricing regime was agreed to. In addition to these three studio sessions BIO continued through to the end of August when it was then put into abeyance due to lack of volunteers to run it. The studio was operating at a loss but was operating.

By late August on the Covid front things were starting to look up then with hospitalizations spiking, on September 13, 2021 in keeping in compliance with BC Health Authority, vaccine passports were required to enter the studio. Despite this set back on October 1, 2021 two more sessions were added; Wednesday mornings and Friday evenings. October 23, 2021 saw the addition of the Saturday morning sessions for a total of six sessions a week. To try and cover costs so we weren't continually operating at a loss the Board raised membership back up to \$60 and increased session ticket pricing, things were looking that good. Then by December 22, 2021 things came to a crashing halt as the studio once again closed due to health concerns over the Omicron variant. The studio remained closed until February 1, 2022 when it reopened under the BC Health Authority category, "indoor events at venues" which permitted indoor venues to operate at 50% capacity. The Wednesday am session had been dropped the previous fall due to poor attendance but in February all other sessions resumed with the addition of Thursday evening sessions; Saturday mornings resumed February 12. To date this is our current session roster.

Aside from the above mentioned operational ordeals the studio has been plagued with the store front window being broken and replaced and water ingress through the ceiling, which has been addressed with the generous contribution by a contractor installing a system to intercept and redirect the water into the kitchen sink. However with the City generally returning to some semblance of "normal" the environment around the studio seems to be calming.

On another positive note the Society received last year a most generous contribution from an anonymous donor to be used for initiatives that will benefit the community. One example will be the on going provision of newsprint; free of charge to the benefit of attendees.

In closing the recruiting of volunteers is an on going concern for the Society. We can have all the money in the world but without volunteers we are essentially sunk. Well I guess if we had all the money in the world we could hire people. But the reality is, in order to keep session fees to a level where most people can comfortably afford to attend sessions we rely on volunteers. Please consider the call when beckoned to run for an elected position on the Board of Directors, session managers or any other duties as are needed to keep the studio operating. On that note I wish to thank all those hard working volunteers who to date have contributed to the continued smooth running of Basic Inquiry.

Douglas Smardon
President