

# The Vancouver Life Drawing Society

## AGM 2016 Minutes

1011 Main Street, Vancouver, B.C.

Saturday April 23, 2016

### **Directors Present:**

Douglas Smardon, President

Nicholas Jackiw, Treasurer

Alain Boullard, Member At Large

### **Officers Present:**

Marlene Van Tassell, Cleaner

Jaime Jones, Financial Clerk

Alexander Dam, Sunday AM Session Manager

Colin Ayers, Saturday AM Session Manager

Additional Members of the Society were present in variable number as members arrived and departed from the meeting.

### **Call To Order**

The meeting commenced at 1:32, with Nick Jackiw recording minutes.

- *Motion by Treasurer to adopt minutes from AGM 2015, seconded by Marlene Van Tassell. Motion carried.*

**President's Report** read and received by members in attendance. See copy attached.

### **Financial Report**

The Treasurer delivered a brief summation of our financial picture. Continuing the trend of last year, the Society has returned to a positive financial outlook after several years of expenses outstripping income. Revenues were up 3.3% (with more than 75% of our revenues coming from sales of tickets and passes), and expenses were up 1.5% (with our largest annual expense being the fees we pay models, which the Society moved to increase in last year's AGM). This year we also financed the \$5000 Basic Inquiry W. L. Davis Memorial Fund at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, using returns from our TD Investment Funds. (Per prior AGM resolution, this bursary will pay \$1000/year over five years to an art student nominated by Emily Carr University.)

All told over 2015 we retained in excess of \$10,000, which is at the upper (positive) end of the

Society's performance variability over the past decade, and compares very favourably with—for example—2013, when we lost approximately this much.

- *Motion by Alain Boullard to accept Financial Report as read, seconded by Jaime Jones.* Motion carried.

### **Service Award**

Nicholas Jackiw presented a Five Year Service Award to Jaime Jones, the Society's financial clerk, recognizing his weekly service tallying session sign-up logs with our accounting systems and managing the transfer of session receipts to the bank. Jaime is a critical volunteer at Basic, and the Society benefits tremendously from his reliable and responsible work. In recognition of this service, the Society gave Jaime a \$200 gift certificate to Opus Art Supplies. Jaime gave an eloquent acceptance speech and made kind remarks about not just his service to, but also the benefit he has taken from, Basic Inquiry over the years.

- *Motion by Nicholas Jackiw to recognize Jaime Jones, Financial Report as read, seconded by Douglas Sardon, unanimously carried.*

### **Handling of Complaints**

The President proposed an informal discussion to address in public the question of how the Society best handles complaints. In the past several months, the Board has received complaints from models against members (reports of inappropriate touching of the model during session), and complaints from members against members (reports of intimidation during session). While the Board recognizes that in the absence of Society bylaws or standing policies about "judicial procedures" that it is authority of "last resort" in handling complaints, it also finds itself in a difficult position evaluating conflicting reports of session situations in which no Board member was actually present.

Society discussion ensued, with considerable participation by present session managers (Colin Ayre and Alexander Dam), in which the following general approach was discussed and generally ratified:

- The primary line of complaint from members and models should be to the **relevant Session Manager**, with the Session Manager then working either to address the complaint on his or her own authority or to invoke the Board's participation as appropriate. (Even when Managers resolve a non-trivial complaint on their own authority, the Board encourages them to report it informationally to the Board and/or the Session Manager volunteer pool to others can be aware of the situation.) Of course, members and models should continue to be allowed recourse to the Board where they believe their Session Manager is not the best person to handle the complaint. Session Managers and the Board should do a better job of communicating this line of accountability to members, e.g. through studio signage, discussion in the Session Manager's handbook, etc. And at the same time, **a requirement of effective session management is that Managers themselves need to be sufficiently present, involved, and assertive to field and resolve complaints arising in their sessions.**

In addition, while considering complaints in general, three recurring “common grievances” were raised, with discussion leading to the following conclusions:

- **Signin Fraud.** Some people clearly exploit Session Managers and do not sign in, or sign in but falsely claim to pay. Others make honest mistakes, claiming to pay when they’ve forgotten, or paying incorrectly by depositing their money in the tip jar rather than the session box. Given that the Society’s losses here are minimal and that any more rigorous system would require more administrative hassle for everyone and more police-like behavior for Session Managers, we decided to take no action at this time beyond **encouraging session managers to clearly distinguish the tip jar from the receipts box at sign in.**
- **The Tip Jar.** Some managers feel pressured by models to announce and solicit tips on their behalf; some members have complained that other members chronically fail to tip models; etc. In discussion, the Society feels it is not a restaurant: our models are adequately paid *without* tips and **there is no obligation to members or managers to tip models** or to insist others tip them. At the same time, we all appreciate and benefit from excellent, well-motivated models, and **we encourage members whose means and inclinations allow them to tip to keep doing so.** Session Managers are encouraged to point out the tip jar to their session participants, but they should not implore or insist that members leave specific tips—that should be a member-decision, not a managerial one.
- **Artists’ Sprawl, Staked Out Positions, Custom Easels, and other Space Hogs.** There was considerable discussion about the situation, especially common in long poses, where regular artist members feel entitled to specific pose accommodations and rights to specific positions in the room, or to the ability to arrive early and set up custom easels and a multiple drawing-horse/tabouret to situate themselves to their best advantage. **None of these entitlements exist** and session managers should discourage them beyond the obvious courtesy of allowing artists *returning to a continuing pose they have already started* to resume their former position. In specific, the Society’s posted policy says that in crowded situations **an artist is entitled to one easel or drawing horse**, and if artists bring their own easels or horses they should not take up more room than our own studio equipment. (In specific, tripod easels often have giant footprints that prevent artists from seating close together.) In some long pose situations, “crowding”—and therefore restrictions on space artists should occupy—occurs well before the studio is full, since a particular long pose obviously advantages only part of the room; and **session managers should be proactive in alerting artists that they may have to make accommodations if crowding occurs**, as well as to actually relocate those artists when crowding does occur. Said differently, while it’s fine to arrive early to claim an advantageous seat, **artists who occupy more than one easel or drawing horse, or who bring their own bulky equipment, should be aware they may need to relocate mid-pose to accommodate later participants’ fair access** to the pose.

### **New Business**

*Alexander Dam made a motion that the Society purchase new linens for outfitting the model stand, the old ones—though clean—having become somewhat ratty. Nick Jackiw seconded the motion and it carried. The Treasurer will advise the Society Purchaser to acquire new sheets (5-7 non-white, non-patterned sheets) and, if possible, new throw pillows.*

The President discussed the recurring problem of the Society's difficulty attracting new volunteers to vacant Board positions, and we were pleased to have Paul Kernan volunteer to take on the vacant Secretary position.

### **Election of New Board.**

- With no other candidates or volunteers for Board position, Nicholas Jackiw moved to elect a board consisting of existing officers and Paul Kernan as new Secretary. Jaime Jones seconded the motion and it carried.

Thus following this AGM the Board becomes:±

President: Douglas Smardon  
Vice President: Randal Cullen  
Treasurer: Nicholas Jackiw  
Member at Large: Alain Boullard  
Secretary: Paul Kernan

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 2:41pm.