

GABRIOLA RECREATION SOCIETY

2021 PRESIDENTS REPORT – by Kyle Clifford

The year 2021 was the second year of the world wide Covid19 pandemic. Although Gabriola was spared high infection rates and impacts any significant on our local health care system, the Gabriola Recreation Society (GRS) was impacted by Provincial Health Orders. Programs that could adhere to the health guidelines were offered and specific protocols implemented to help keep everyone safe. Our two primary staff in 2021, Virginia and Jenny, and our complement of summer staff did an amazing job of working within the guidelines to provide some creative and exciting programs for children and to a limited extent adults as well.

The most significant change for the GRS in 2021 was the transition to retirement for our long term Program Coordinator, Virginia Ebbels. With advance notice given in 2020 Virginia moved from her full time position early in 2021, to part time for approximately 6 months followed by full retirement in the fall of 2021. The changeover was made by initially splitting her position between a part time Program Coordinator and part time Program Manager. Virginia retained the Program Manager position with new position description. The Program Coordinator position was recruited and was responded to by a number of very good candidates. Jenny Ivany was deemed to be the most qualified and best fit for this position. This was our staffing compliment through the summer of 2021 with the addition of seasonal summer staff to enable a number of program options to be offered.

In the fall of 2021 phase two of Virginia's retirement transition took place with a rewrite of her Program Manager position to become Operation Coordinator. This position was advertised and again there was a good number of applicates resulting in Erin Mikulin being hired to the position. Going forward we now have the two permanent positions, Program Coordinator and Operations Coordinator splitting the weekly hours (plus 5hrs) formerly comprising Virginia's position. This appears to be an excellent option for the GRS and enables us to retain the skillset of two talented women.

As President and a member of the GRS Human Resources sub-committee I have been directly involved with the revisions to the various position descriptions and the recruitment of the permanent staff at the GRS. I have been working quite closely with the staff during their first year and hopefully provided adequate feedback.

2021 saw the retirement of long-term board member and vice president Paul Metcalfe. Paul was thanked for service and many years of participation on the Board. Two new Board members were added this past fall, Lesley Hazeldine and Phil Purnell. It would be desirable to seek out one or two more volunteers to flesh out the board.

I would like to conclude this report by publicly thanking Virginia Ebbels for her many years of dedicated service to the GRS. She became an “institution” to a generation of Gabriolans and well known as the go-to person for recreation programing on this island. I wish her all the best in her retirement.