

2020 AGM PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

By Doloris Duval

August 18, 2020

I want to begin by thanking you for allowing me the honor of acting as your president over the past two years. As a bit of an introvert I found presiding over each weekly meeting, all the Executive Meetings and all of the special events somewhat daunting. However as I come to the end of this exhilarating presidency, I must tell you that it was a far more rewarding life experience than I can ever express to you and one for which I am sincerely grateful. I highly recommend this experience to every single club member.

During this time, I have had the distinct pleasure of working with each of the members of the Executive Committee. Their thoughtful sense of purpose, continuous enthusiasm and range of talents and experience was inspiring.

Looking back over the year has been an uplifting process. Yes, we have experienced unexpected losses and disappointments but there were also many highlights that must not go unrecognized.

Just after the AGM last year we were shocked and saddened by the passing of former club president Lillian Tickle. We were then deeply touched when her husband, Ed, joined us at our first meeting in October to present us with a generous bequest to the club on Lillian's behalf. At that time, he shared with us that her wish was that everyone's membership dues for the year be paid through this fund. Ed enjoyed attending occasional club meetings and is now considered to be an honorary member of the CWLC.

The first meeting in October launched our continuing pursuit of a theme-based topic and so the 2019-2020 session of ***Culture Through Literature***. Sandra created for us a new and exciting program which included talks about a variety of authors from a range of cultures. The guest speakers Jaspreet Singh, Natalie Meisner and Sharanpal Ruprai joined us to share their work. Each of these engaging presenters greatly enhanced our appreciation of their unique perspectives. We also experimented a bit by introducing a panel discussion and this proved to be something that we will continue to incorporate into our program schedule.

The Winter Party at Amica was a resounding success. Ruth Hilland addressed the group with the charm and decorum we have come to expect from this elegant former president. Moorea ensured that we enjoyed a bountiful feast and then provided entertainment by opera singer, Melissa Jackson. A perfect afternoon. We left the party feeling uplifted and full of anticipation for the year ahead.

We had barely begun our new season when Covid 19 intervened and I was forced to cancel the meeting, then the month and then the year complete with Luncheon and AGM. I would like you to know how

strenuously the Calgary Golf and Country Club worked with me over these past months in order to accommodate the health and safety needs that would allow us to proceed with our function. They reworked menu plans, serving methods and booking dates all to no avail, and now they assure me they await our return for the AGM next spring.

Thinking all the way back to 2012, it was Ruth Hilland who led us into creating a website for our club. Janet Halls, as they say, “ran with it”. Janet now reports that our website has had 20,000 hits as of mid-August of this year.

In my talk last year, I highlighted some of the challenges our club had faced. One of those challenges was the technology in our little room at the Memorial Park Branch. I “complained” about our struggles with the lack of internet access that thwarted the use of PowerPoint and YouTube videos to enhance our presentations. We all agreed that.... technology.... bad!

Well, over the past months it has become painfully clear that our usual means of connection has become near-to-impossible. With no club meetings, I have had to rely on group email messages as I attempted to move us through these confusing months. Culminating, I suppose, in today’s emailed **Annual General Meeting**.

I would like to thank you very much for all of the supportive email messages and calls. They have been so encouraging and have meant so much to me. Certainly, the past months have made it painfully clear to each of us just how essential the club is in our lives. Denise Doz articulated those sentiments so beautifully in her poem entitled *“It has been far too long”* which Janet immediately posted on our website last May. So, clearly we must find a way to move ahead in order to maintain our connection and to continue on in our *pursuit of literature*.

I have expressed my genuine appreciation for the energy and the sense of team-work that this executive committee has brought to bear over the past two years and how grateful I have been to be able to work beside such an outstanding collection of women. Well please know that over these past months those women have shown themselves to be the ninja warriors of problem solving and innovative thinking!

While we all agree that nothing will ever be a substitute for the camaraderie that we enjoy during our in-person weekly meetings it seems that if we are to indeed have an upcoming year.... or to continue at all.... we must find a new way of doing things. One that strikes a balance between what we wish was the case and what is realistically possible in today’s world. How do we accomplish this? While I realize that on-line platforms like Zoom are unfamiliar and uncomfortable to some of us, this format is what may help us find a way forward. Carrying such a transition out, providing the support and guidance that might be needed to ensure success for every one of us will fall into the very capable hands of your new executive team.

But before exploring that any further let us pause for a moment to acknowledge that with each new executive team we bid adieu to some members of the previous team. At-this-time Margaret Sparkes is stepping away from an executive role after serving as Program Chair, Vice President, President and most

recently, Past President. The contribution she has made to the club over these years has been invaluable and we extend to her our heartfelt thank you.

I know that you are already well-aware that our dear friend, Cecilia has found it necessary to step aside from the Presidency and all executive duties for the next while but I assure you that she will continue to be an interested and involved club member; just in a less demanding capacity for the time being.

Consequently, during our last Executive Meeting we revised the Slate of Officers to read as follows. Robin has very graciously stepped up to embrace the new challenges and rewards of club presidency. Moorea has agreed to move into the role of Vice President and Linda has agreed to become the new Social Committee Chair. Sandi will continue as Program Chair, Helen as Secretary and Elaine will take over as Treasurer. I will I now move on to become your Past President.

It is this new Slate of Officers identified in the attachment entitled **The Motion of Executive Committee** that I have asked each of you to ratify by voting to **accept**. You may do so through an email to me in which you simply say 'I ACCEPT'

I wish to extend to Robin a very warm welcome into her new role. She will provide superb leadership and will be an outstanding representative of the Calgary Women's Literary Club. As we move into our 115th year, I know that we are doing Annie proud.

Thank you.