



**The Calgary Burns Club
Minutes of the 2019 Dinner Debrief Meeting
held at The Danish Canadian Club, Calgary
Saturday February 16th, 2019**

Present were; Paul Armstrong; Trekker Armstrong; Ron Budd; Henry Cairney; Ken Carr; Brian Cumming; Tony Grace; Jim Hope-Ross; Don Humphreys; Jim Hutchens; Bill Laing; Maurice McAtamney; Gordon McCulloch; Hugh McFadzean; George Muir; Stephen Nichol; Gerry Wood; and John Young.

The meeting was chaired by Jim Hope-Ross.

Financial Results.

The preliminary Financial Results had been discussed at the Club meeting on Tuesday February 12th, 2019 but at that time the information was not complete. Jim started off by presenting the financial status as best known today;

- The net revenue is \$86,320.99, which allows for the disposal of the unused Scotch and Wine and for the sale of some glasses. This does not include any sponsorship money.
- The net expenses were \$95,356.24 assuming a GST credit of \$391.01.
- This leads to a net deficit (again not allowing for any sponsorships) of \$10,324.68.
- However there was sponsorship money totalling \$19,500.00 of which \$3000.00 came from outside the Club.
- When the sponsorship money is included with the net revenue (as above) the total revenue becomes \$105,820.99 which leads to a surplus of \$9,175.32 as opposed to a deficit.
- The exact number of guests is not clear however the number of meals served was 480. This included 6 complimentary meals and 30 tickets credited to sponsors, of which 2 were used by Club members and 28 to non-club member guests.
- Two items in particular exceeded their budget allowance. The costs of the photographic service could be reduced by going elsewhere and probably getting a better service than at present. Due to serious health issues of the usual photographer, we elected to stay with her as a gesture of good-will, but the situation needs to be looked at again next year.
- The logistics of getting the commemorative glasses the way we are currently getting them causes extra costs. The lead time is excessive and requires that we over-purchase to ensure we have enough. Also the current Glencairn glasses are more expensive than the traditional

tumbler style we have had in the past. This whole process needs to be changed and simplified in order to save the Club's money. This year glasses costing over \$1000 were surplus to our requirements, all of course engraved with the date 2019 thus limiting their usefulness for other purposes.

Commentary

Based on the results of the Survey and anecdotal stories of the evening it was clearly a great success and enjoyed by the vast majority of the attendees. There had been a very encouraging response to the Survey put out by Trekker Armstrong with some 75% responding. It should be remembered that the survey was only circulated to the Club's members and so does not include any input from guests who are not members. Highlights of the replies were:

- Value for money – about 75% indicated excellent or very good. No one said poor.
- Length of the evening – nearly 90% reported it being about right. 2 respondents suggested it was too long. The length of the intermission should be shorter as it currently causes the evening to lose momentum.
- Satisfaction with the meal – 95% reported as being very or somewhat satisfied with only 1 individual reporting as being somewhat dissatisfied. This result is particularly gratifying as great efforts were made with the TCC to improve both the quality and serving of the meal.
- Entertainment – all respondents reported as being good or better.
- Rating of the Convention Centre – about 90% suggested it was good or better, with only 2 rating it fair. The addition of the third screen made a big difference and was deemed essential.
- Greater appreciation of Burns and Scottish culture – 45% suggested a lot or a great deal but 50% reported only moderate amount. This area needs to be looked at to see how it might be improved – the lack of any Burns' poems was a big disappointment.
- Overall rating of the event – all respondents reporting it as good or better with over 80% as very good or excellent.

Following the reporting of the survey results there was an animated discussion about a number of points most of which had been in the open feedback portion of the survey.

- Recognizing that this is the signature event of the Club it is worthy of note that some 20 Club members had not attended – some 33% of the total membership. It was hoped that more members will attend in future and preferably bring family members as well as other guests who are interested the event for itself and not just having a “fun evening” with friends.
- It needs to be remembered that this is a private event and not open to the general public which limits any advertising. Making it a public event would impact on the licensing and insurance terms and costs.
- We need to define the meaning of Formal Dress as we regularly have guests showing up without jackets, ties etc. This requirement should be included in the guidelines which accompany the ticket request forms.
- A decision needs to be made as to whether we should limit the number of attendees in future. With lower numbers in the past 2 or 3 years a higher percentage of attendees have a greater appreciation for the purpose of the evening and pay more attention to the entertainment and speeches. In turn this reduces the amount of background noise.
- Having the 3 large screens means that all guests are able to follow the entertainment and songs better as well as be more involved in the event. Again this helps reduce the background noise as the guests participate in what is going on and don't treat the event as an opportunity to socialize with old friends.

- If the number of attendees is limited (say about 500) then other locations might be attractive and should be looked at, with the intent of reducing the cost of the evening.
- However it must be remembered what we are getting at the Convention Centre. They have been paying us a lot more attention than previously (thanks to the Club's Vice Presidents, efforts and their hard work with them), and the new team we had at the Centre this year have made efforts to improve their performance and trim costs where they can. Moving elsewhere would mean we would start over again working with a new organization and a new team. This would include the co-ordination of the meal and the Scotch with the entertainment and speeches. There is also the need to provide the necessary audio and visual services which we now take for granted at the Convention Centre.
- The supply of the Scotch should be reviewed – could the TCC supply it for the same price that we currently pay (assuming we have a say in which Scotch is provided) in which case we would save the corkage fee we currently pay as well as possibly simplifying the two-licence situation we currently have.

In conclusion Jim Hutchens thanked Jim Hope-Ross for a most successful evening and for taking us all through the debrief session today. He also thanked Trekker Armstrong for working with Jim Hope-Ross over the Survey and tabulating the results. Finally he expressed his appreciation to all the members for their input to the Survey as well as the thoughtful discussion that had taken place today.

Adjournment

Tony Grace moved the meeting be adjourned at 1:45pm