

Annual Report from Funeral Consumers' Society of London and Windsor for FOOMS. May 2018

In August 2017, our longtime Board Member, Sally Galsworthy, died suddenly after a short illness. She was a wonderful person and valued contributor to our organization. Reno has taken over her duties as treasurer.

We have had 5 meetings of our Board since the FOOMS meeting last May.

Highlights of the year:

- We discussed the possibility of amalgamation with other Ontario Memorial Societies as was brought forward at the 2017 FOOMS annual meeting. We agreed to participate in discussions towards this amalgamation. We sent a letter to FOOMS/FAMS acknowledging our decision to move towards amalgamation and suggesting that we are waiting for their direction on next steps.
- We agreed to cancel our phone service from Bell as it was not being used much.
- We also decided to eliminate fees when someone becomes a new member. We had only taken in \$200 in the previous year and want to develop our organization into a non-membership based one.
- We received an email from Jim Jobb, president of the Memorial Society of Edmonton and District, www.memorialsocietyedmonton.ca They have a membership of 9000, with over 5000 active members. They are working to expand public awareness by sponsoring presentations on topics of interest to their members and to the general public. They have an ongoing dialogue with the Calgary Co-operative Memorial Society which has proven mutually beneficial through an exchange of ideas and discussion of common concerns. They believe that a similar dialogue with our society might prove advantageous to us both. We have not acted on this to date.
- With regard to understanding our financial situation, a meeting was arranged with Ron Calhoun and June Pinkney, formerly part of the executive of this Board, to gather some historical perspective. Our money, about \$50,000 donated when the cooperative funeral home, Memorial Funeral Home, was sold, is held by the London Community Foundation. They invest it and we receive between \$1000 and \$2000 a year, but this money must initially go through a registered charity. As our organization lost its charitable status several years ago, through the efforts of June Pinkney, Pat Chefurka and Ron Calhoun, we have an arrangement with Daya Counselling Services, which is a registered charity, to accept the funds, deduct a small amount, and give us what remains.
- Board members Reno Dehaan and Shannon Calvert, along with Ron Calhoun, met with Martha Powell (Exec. Dir.) and Vijay Venkatesan (V. P. Finance & Operations) of the London Community Foundation to more fully understand our financial situation and the processes involved. We wanted to find out if proceeding with the amalgamation would affect our access to these funds. This was a productive meeting and we all gained insight into each other's organization.
- Our next step was to meet with Rebecca Machado, the Executive Director of Daya Counselling Services. It was clear that our mandates are still compatible. They would

be open to discussing our funding arrangement once we have a clear understanding of what amalgamation would look like.

- We have had two King's University Thanatology student projects since May of 2017. The first was a large data gathering project to understand the kinds of information that other Memorial Societies offer on their websites. We did this in advance of a possible amalgamation as a major objective of a provincial group would be as an information source. The second student project gathered information in three areas. Updates for our website, a collation of organizational information on FCALW, and a list of ideas and approaches for possible FCALW events.
- Joyce and Len have subsequently edited our website to reflect organizational changes.
- Regarding the Agenda for FOOMS, FCALW put forward to FOOMS members our thoughts on amalgamation with the hope that other groups would do the same so we would have a foundation to begin our conversations during the FOOMS annual meeting.
- In April, FCALW sponsored an information night called *Talking About Death Isn't Life Threatening: The Basics of Getting Your Life/Death in Order* put on by End of Life Navigation through Shannon Calvert. The event was offered by donation and FCALW covered the major costs. Information on wills and powers of attorney was shared, and was received very positively by the twenty people in attendance.
- We decided to postpone our annual meeting usually held in April and the sending out our annual newsletter till fall 2018 in light of possible organizational changes.

Submitted by Joyce Orchard, secretary of the Board of The Funeral Consumers Advocacy of London and Windsor, May 17, 2018