

Summary

What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness. John Steinbeck

CALL had its summer and its winter this year. Summer came first, lasting till March 9, 2020. Winter followed, as we adapted to the rules and regulations that COVID 19 forced on us.

Thanks to the continuing energy and enthusiasm of our members we survived the winter well.

And we can start to see spring is coming again with new and different programs showing as green shoots. But as Steinbeck wrote, the winter has made us appreciate how good CALL's summers have been – and never-ending till this year

Because there have been 3 parts of our year, our summer (From September 1, 2019 to March 2020), our winter (from March 10, 2020 onwards) and our spring (today and looking forward) that are so different from each other, I will report on them separately for each item.

Programs – Committee Chair, Diana Bloom

Summer (September 2019-2March 2020) Started with a blockbuster Kick Off meeting featuring Brian Keating and attracting over 450 members and guests – by far the largest kickoff event that CALL has ever had. Our Speaker Series events were always well attended and several of the Interest Groups put up the Full sign. All was going really well, until ...

Winter (from March 9, 2020) We had to immediately stop all face to meetings, which meant **ALL** events. Interest groups quickly adapted to meeting by Zoom. In fact, new groups started up – led by 4 groups that 'met' for coffee to discuss how they were coping with the new world we were all living in.

June 6, 2020 was a special day for CALL – 10 years to the day after our 5 Founders decided to start CALL as a Peer Learning group. We recognized Carol Gerein, Don Smith, Arlene and Bob Stamp and Barbara Grant for their wisdom and diligence. In recent years I have had contact with several other Lifelong Learners groups, and I have not seen so many who have succeeded as well as CALL. Tom me this has been due so much to the concept that the 'Fabulous Five' had and followed through on. Our resilience in the last few months has been testament to that.



Spring With the real summer coming, some groups wanted to meet face to face outside. The Board developed protocols for these to happen and several took advantage of it. The response to the City Walking groups was such that 3 separate groups started meeting.

The Public Policy Speaker series began with Audrey Doerr developing and delivering a 3-session program on Canadian Federalism, which was very highly registered for.

Jill Chambers continues to arrange a set of Speakers on Health and Wellness.

Since inside face to face meetings will be rare for several months at least, Zoom technology will be the way we will deliver programs. The first priority is to relaunch as many of the Speaker Series as we can.

But the big changes for the pandemic mean that green shoots can be seen. If Programs are delivered by Zoom, there is no reason why CALL members outside Calgary cannot participate in them. Similarly, in Calgary, residents who are housebound can also participate.

One door closes, others open!!!

Special Programming - Committee Chair, Mary Lou Kerr

This was the first year for this new CALL Committee. It has become the home any program that non-CALL members can participate in (excluding Speaker Series where they can attend as guests). This covers Ukefest, Conferences Bus Trips, Bridge with Rosedale Community, Lunch and Learn and others.

In anticipation of there being several bus trips in the year, the Board approved a policy on Bus trips,

Summer by March 9, a Conference on Fake News was being planned, members were registering for Bus trips in the Spring and Summer.



Calgary Association of Lifelong Learners – 2019-2020 President’s report

Winter All activity had to stop immediately, since all involved either being outside or inside in ‘larger’ numbers.

Ukefest, by far, CALL largest event, had to do a major rethink on how it could run in a COVID restrictive environment

Spring One green shoot that has bloomed is the 2 programs being done jointly with the McGill Lifelong Learners organization, both meeting by Zoom. One is studying books by Quebec and Alberta authors. The other discusses why Alberta and Quebec, as provinces, often have quite different opinions and policies on key Canadian issues. This could be the model for many future programs

Ukefest is now planning a quite different event for 2021, probably spreading activities over many weeks online. The Mens Shed Program is starting again.

Finances – Committee Chair, Rita McGillivray

Summer Over the 10 years of its existence, CALL has accumulated a healthy financial surplus which was very comforting as we entered the COVID world, not knowing what to expect.

The use of eTransfers for paying bills was started and has been used without incident throughout the year. This has saved the Treasurer a LOT of time.

Winter As it turned out, delivering programs though ZOOM was less expensive than using rented space. So, our financial health has not been hurt by the pandemic.

The Finance Committee drafted a policy for the investment of funds not required for CALL’s immediate needs. Any investment would be in very safe instruments with guaranteed returns. Because of the rock bottom returns on such investments these days, no investments have yet been made. The Board approved the policy.

Spring in our financial world, spring is not looking so good as other parts of CALL. We usually lose about 20-25% of our membership year over year but have always been able to have more new members join than those we have lost. However, we expect there will be a more substantial membership loss than usual and not a lot of optimism that we will be able to recover all those lost members by the end of our 2020-21 year.

But we are not concerned that CALL will be in financial difficulties in the next 12 months.

Membership – Committee Chair, Meryl Arnott

Summer the Fall 2019 kick off meeting that featured Brain Keating triggered a major growth in membership.

In January, we held the first Meet and Greet session to welcome new members and inform them about CALL. The Scott Hall at Varsity Acres Church was filled, probably exceeding the proscribed limits for the room. Thanks to Nancy Barrett and her team for putting this success on. The plans are to make it an annual event, probably by Zoom for the near future. As a result, we had about 1180 members when our summer ended on March 9

Winter Membership growth slowed dramatically, so that by our August 31 year end, we had added only about 40 members since March 9. In the previous 2 years, CALL had added about 160 new members in the same period each year.

Spring Like the financial area, this will take time to recover. Because we give members a 3-month period after September 1 to renew their membership, we do not know the exact number of members that we currently have. But we are assuming that the drop off will be more than the rate in recent years of 20-25%

Operations – Committee Chair, Carrol Jacques

a. Meeting places

Summer the operations group worked closely with the Venues Committee to arrange for meeting places for Program events and other CALL meetings. Room 310 at cSpace was in extremely high demand. Other rooms at cSpace were used for some programs. Speaker Series events continued to be run in Room 310, Varsity Acres Church and the Haysboro Community Centre. Other groups met at Rosedale Community Centre, Marda Loop Community Centre and a couple of other churches

Winter With all indoor meetings stopped, the role of this part of Operations moved to working how indoor meetings could possibly be held. The focus was mainly on Room 310 at cSpace, as we pay monthly rent for it, whether it is used or not. As of the time of the AGM, no program groups have met indoors at Room 310. Some small informal CALL meetings have been held there.

Spring Not much has changed. While a membership survey showed about 25% of the members replying indicated they would attend safely organized meetings, no Interest Groups have yet committed to meeting indoors

b. Support for Programs and other CALL groups

Summer at the start of the CALL Year - September 2019, the AV support group was moved from the IT group to Operations. This was done as the great majority of AV needs came from the Program Committee that the Operations Committee was formed to support. In addition, the technologies and skill levels of the IT (webteam) and the AV group had little in common and quite different skills sets. The AV team, led by Richard Farrand, grew in both size and skill and provided excellent support at many CALL events

Winter With no in person meetings, all AV needs went away. Zoom technology arrived, and the AV team became the Zoom Support Centre again led by Richard Farrand. They have supported Interest Groups, and Board meetings. Their skills have grown to the point of being able to run multimedia events

Spring Zoom is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future and gives CALL options on how to deliver programs. As I mentioned earlier, this could include delivering program far outside Calgary or to housebound Calgary residents.

Venues – Committee Chair – Robert Scott

Summer 2 key events needed attention at the start of the year. Our Lease with the Rosedale Community Centre would expire at the end of August 2020 and our cSpace lease would expire at the end of 2020. The Rosedale lease needed to be resigned and we needed to know how a new lease at cSpace would look like for the 2020-21 CALL budget. Both organizations indicated they wished us to

continue being their tenants. CALL has been at Rosedale for many years and the Community Centre has been remarkably generous in the terms under which we used their facilities. We expected to be paying more in any new lease and that is what they have proposed. The terms are very reasonable, and the Board approved working out a new deal with them starting on September 1, 2020

Winter All changed on March 9. No venues were used, and activity focused on the new leases at Rosedale and cSpace. Rosedale needed time to work out how tenants would be able to use their space because of COVID. They have many groups using the Centre including several involving children. cSpace has had the same issue and has developed protocols for anyone using the facility. They have indicated expected costs to CALL for use of Room 310 and other rooms there. They were acceptable to us and Board had them used in developing the 2020-21 budget

Spring

We did not receive an updated version of the Rosedale lease agreement before September 1, so it was not signed before then. Since we are not using their facilities except for some storage space, this has not mattered

Since we pay rent at cSpace whether we use it not, any indoor meetings will be held there.

Sadly, we have not had any proposal for use at Varsity Acres Church, a venue we have liked so much and where their representatives have been so, so good to us

IT support - Committee Chair, Linda Flanagan

Summer the webteam had to handle a very large number of new members in the fall of 2019, as well as carrying out their usual heavy workload.

The team had suggested to the Treasurer that CALL move from PayPal to Affinipay, a similar system to PayPal that was part of the Wild Apricot system CALL uses. This had the potential to save CALL money. However, Affinipay was not compatible with the Quick Books software used by CALL for accounting, so we decided to stay with PayPal.

Winter Initially, the webteam took over support for the use of the new Zoom technology. This involved learning it themselves, training Facilitators, Coordinators and Committee Chairs on its use and to

support them when they used it – and misused it. This was a very heavy addition to their already substantial workload. To ease the situation, all these Zoom related tasks were moved to Operations group. In essence ZOOM was replacing AV so this was a sensible move that has worked out well

Spring With CALL programs changing so much, the webteam has started working with others on ways to improve and possibly redesign our website. One suggestion has been made is to continually display pictures, videos, sketches and other creations of the CALL Interest Groups that have developed them

CALL is so lucky to have the webteam. Their skills are formidable, the service is impeccable, and everything is done with great humour and respect for others. CALL owes so much to them – Linda Flanagan, Aldo and Shauna Romazin, Margaret Verenka and Wayne Murphy.

Records Management – Committee Chair, Mary Vernon

Summer the Board approved a Policy for Records Management. Its implementation has meant that CALL can be comfortable that its key records are safely stored and available for retrieval when needed. Our thanks go to Mary Vernon and Linda Jackson for their diligence and effort to achieve this. Personally, I know they have saved me several times from my own poor filing habits

Winter Not much changed for this group operationally. The Board decided to change the role of the Board’s Secretary to one comparable to the Secretary of a commercial Board of Directors to include Records Management.

Spring Hoping that the rest of the Board will continue to send key CALL records for their safekeeping. Note to self – must do this after the AGM

Governance Committee Chair, Barbara Murray

Summer Barbara led a sub Committee that looked at the roles of the Board’s Committees to see if changes should be made. This resulted in recommending that

- a. Membership and Volunteers need to be separate committees
- b. The role of Secretary should be expanded to include Records Management and responsibility for filing documents to Governments when required

- c. Having a Marketing Committee
- d. Merging the Venues Committee into the Operations Committee
- e. Moving the Social functions from the Fund Development Committee to the Special Projects Committee

The Board approved these recommended changes

Winter This did not change the role of this Committee much. The Committee obtained an updated member waiver, especially to clarify the status of members who have not renewed in the grace period after September 1 each year. The Board approved the new waiver, and it has been in use since May 2020.

The Governance Committee also led a self-review of the effectiveness of the Board. To my knowledge this had not been done before. The results were generally positive. The most value of the data is to use it as a base to look for trends in future years.

Spring As the year closed the Committee led the Nominations Committee for the 2020-21 Board members. An excellent slate of candidates was developed

Volunteers – Committee Chair, vacant

Summer The Previous Committee Chair, Marika Kohut, resigned her position for health reasons. Her position was filled by a team of four who were represented by Irene McPherson at the Board. They proved successful at filling many needs for Volunteers

Winter The need for volunteers disappeared, though one of the volunteer team continued as a permanent member of the Ukefest planning subcommittee.

The Board restated the responsibilities of the Volunteer Committee. The Volunteer Committee members did not agree with these and all resigned. No replacement has been found

Social & Fund Development - Committee Chair, Pattie Oxendale

Summer There no activity in Fund Development. The Social Committee was continually active at the CALL Cafes and at the Meet and Greet event for new members

Winter Again no activity in Fund Development. While the topic was on the Board’s Annual work plan for its purpose to be reviewed, nothing was done about it. There seemed little urgency for it to be addressed when much more immediate issues had to be worked on

Spring No activity again. The area does need review by the Board to clarify its purpose

Board

All seasons as president, I was extremely fortunate to have a dedicated and skilled group on the Board. Without exception they participated in Board activities prepared and committed. At Board meetings, mutual respect was the norm. Thanks to all of you.

Four members of the Board will not be on it next year. To them, thanks for your multiple years of service. They are

1. **Karen Sharp**, Past President for this year. She took the role in stride and was involved in many key aspects of the Board this year. These included starting the Zoom Coffee Interest groups, participating in the Committee Review on Nominations work, and managing from start to finish a survey of CALL members on their interest (or not) in resuming face to face meetings. The Board will really miss you
2. **Rita McGillivray**, out Treasurer for the last 2 years. Rita has brought a new level of financial expertise to the role of CALL Treasurer. She moved our financial records on to the Quick Books software, she initiated the use of eTransfers for bill paying and helped draft our Investment policy. And She trained her successor, Cathy Martin. I always listened and read what Rita put out very carefully. I know a lot of thought had gone into it. Your legacy will stay with CALL for some time
3. **Robert Scott**, our Venue Coordinator. Robert has been on the Board for a few years in different roles. His best value to CALL has come from his knowledge of buildings. This was invaluable when we started considering a move into cSpace through to his work since we have been there. Robert likes analytics. This year he analyzed the postal codes of CALL members and found – to much surprise - that the T2X area with the most members is the Strathcona, Broadcast Hill area, CALL is very grateful that Robert will continue to be on the Operations Committee
4. **Pattie Oxendale**, our Fund Development and Social Committee Chair. Like Robert, Pattie has been on the Board for a few years. She says her only skill is ‘making a good cup of coffee’ She greatly underestimates herself. One area she always has pertinent information and comment about is the

safety of our members and guests. She also brought me down to the ground when Judy Hammill and I has ambitious plans for filming speaker series events and putting them on the website. Pattie's knowledge of the work involved got that idea out of my head very quickly. We will miss you. I am looking forward to having one of your cups of coffee at a CALL Café sometime soon

. Personal comments

So much of CALL's success comes from the bottoms up approach to its development. Every Speaker Series and every Interest Group has come from a CALL member's initiative. This year the Board has had to be involved much more than usual in day to day operations. It is inspiring to see that this has not stifled the initiative of members to continue running programs and planning to start new ones

Next year, it is likely that I will be the only male on the CALL Board, and I will automatically leave the Board at the end of the year. It is accepted that Diversity brings strength to organizations. Having a Board that has no or very few males on it is not healthy. I hope the new Board addresses this situation.

It has been a privilege to serve as your President for the year.

Respectfully submitted

Ron Foyer

October 10, 2020