

From: Don Town donald.town@gmail.com

Date: Aug 14, 2022

To: Judy Black

Subject: Thanks for Belling the Cat

Judy,

Thanks for taking the lead in compiling feedback on the fee increase for presentation to our Board of Directors.

Personally, I can afford the increase but know that we will lose some of our Belleville Centre members as a result of the increase. I am disappointed about this primarily because I cannot offer our Centre members the details justifying the increase. Also, if we lose many more members, the Centre will cease to be viable.

I am also disappointed with the attitude displayed by our Board of Directors – a combination of dismissive and condescending reaction to Council requests for more background justification.

I fought a personal battle on whether to either quit the RASC in protest or try to stick it out to:

- see what, if any, additional actions will be taken by the Board and,
- attempt to change our financial reporting to be more open and transparent.

For planning purposes, I chose the latter (for now) because I see the benefits of RASC membership currently outweigh the actions displayed by our current Board.

If your summary presented to the Board is treated casually and without additional rationalization, we have a few longer term options that can be pursued.

I do not see a groundswell of individuals looking to stand for election to Board positions, but we can try to elect individuals who are more receptive to suggestions from Council and less secretive regarding financial details.

Another option is to present a Motion at our next General Meeting requiring more detailed disclosure on our financial statements and budgets. I doubt that any motion of this kind will be supported by the Board, but having a member based motion passed will require broad based support from our membership.

Hopefully we will receive a better reception based on your Q&A summary that results in our membership feeling that the increase was properly justified.

Regards,

Don Town

National Council Representative for Belleville (for the past 18 years)

From: Don Town donald.town@gmail.com

Date: Aug 14, 2022

To: Stephan Nourse, Ottawa Centre President

Stephan,

thanks for preparing a well thought out letter for Judy to include with her submission to the Board regarding the 2022 fee increase.

I noted in my letter to Judy (see above) that we can prepare a member Motion for better financial transparency. Based on the Canadian Not for Profit Act, this may be one way for our membership concerns to be formally heard and acted upon.

Sadly, it will take time if we have to wait until our next General Assembly Meeting to formally present and vote on a member based motion.

In the meantime, I will be scouring the Act and our Bylaws to see if there is a more timely way to request action from the Board.

Let's hope that our Board responds in a positive manner and more forceful measures are not required.

Regards,

Don Town

From: Judy Black

Aug 15, 2022

To : Don Town donald.town@gmail.com

Hello Don,

I haven't been thanked for being the cat since the 2015 RASC GA in Halifax. I was the "cat herder" for the Wine and Tides bus tour led by Roy Bishop. :)

I have a sense RASC will be losing many more members across the country, and recruiting with fees above \$100 may be a challenge.

Stephen Nourse of Ottawa Centre sent a well-composed letter about concerns raised from his Centre that can very easily be translated to all 30 Centres. Smaller Centres like your and mine will certainly have a challenge keeping our heads above water which we just barely do now. The source of members needs to be recognized by the National body. As Ottawa Centre said, "We suggest that it is actually the Centres that are primarily responsible for the level of RASC membership numbers, not National. What brings in members is the personal touch. Outreach programs, star parties, Centre observatories, loan libraries, and open meetings are what is getting new members to join. Grass roots engagement at the Centre level is bringing in membership, not National big picture programs."

Like you, I hope RASC comes out better and stronger when the next GA rolls around. Perhaps insisting on more detailed reports and open discussion between the Board and the NC may help clarify membership fee increases and maybe even reduce the need for them if alternative routes (yet to be explored) are taken. Heaven help the Board if they treat our concerns casually!

Fingers crossed for a better RASC world. I hate constantly hitting my head against a brick wall.

Regards,
Judy