RTAM Annual General Meeting

Wednesday November 20th, 2024

Executive Director Report

Welcome everyone to the first Fall Annual General Meeting (AGM) being hosted by RTAM. The Board and office are happy to have everyone together this November as we formally change the date and timing of our AGM.

We made the change after advice from our auditor’s and examining rules and recommendations from the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA). To have best practices, we are supposed to have our AGM within six months of our financial year end, the RTAM financial year end is July 1st each year.

During that time, we are to share our audited statements by review to the members, this gives the members a reasonable timeline to hear about the organization’s financial health, growth and concerns. Previously we were hosting our AGM in May and presenting our financials 11 months after our year end, which was a little later than normal or recommended.

We now move forward with the Fall timeline which we hope will bring updates to our members quicker than we did before (less than six (6) months). We hope this helps improve reporting, information sharing and transparency and we look forward to your feedback after this event.

**ACER CART, External Threats, The Need for Change**

Each retired teacher’s provincial organization belongs to the national body, known as ACER CART. At our AGM this past May, we reported that Ontario, who was registered as a national body and not a provincial body, had left the other provinces and ACER CART to pursue larger profits and to promote a national insurance plan.

Each province offers their retired teacher’s insurance as part of their organization’s membership services. While not mandatory, each province sees 50% or more of their members take part in these group plans which are more affordable than individual insurance. For our role in promoting the insurance plans to our members and for the help we offer our members on the phone, through emails and our website allow us to earn Administrative Service revenue from the insurance company. This is key to the operating budgets of each province and each organizations viability.

In recent months, Ontario has increased their paid presence in each Western province, looking to recruit retired teacher members out of their local organizations with the aim of increasing their own membership and insurance participant numbers. To further incentivize growth of their insurance plan, Ontario has removed their annual membership fee for those looking to join their organization moving forward.

The impact to all of us is a threat which will cost the provincial organizations significant revenues and more importantly members. So significant is the threat, each province (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan) are writing and sharing materials with their members about the recruitment by out of province representatives from Ontario. ACER CART has written a national letter which has been shared by all provinces, an open letter to Ontario informing the country of the harm this will cause.

RTAM has looked to strengthen our membership and grow the presence of our insurance plan as an answer to this external threat. We hope to pass a new Education Community Membership, which grows a presence already found within RTAM, that of non-teachers.

*With this new membership type, two questions are routinely being asked by members… will RTAM still be for teachers, by teachers and will this negatively impact our insurance plans?*

The answer to both questions is that we have plans in place to help RTAM grow safely.

New members from the Education Community stream are not full members, they are associate members, just like husbands, wives and partners. This means they cannot join the Board of Directors or vote at our AGM. Only full members (teachers) can serve on the RTAM Board of Directors and vote.

Regarding concerns to the insurance plan, all new members coming into RTAM who are looking to join our insurance plans, may do so if they are transferring from another plan where they have been screened previously. If they are not coming from another plan, they will have to be screened and approved before coming into the plan.

Additionally, RTAM will keep this plan separate from the main plan (current members) which allows for clear tracking and the ability to terminate should there ever be a negative impact to RTAM’s health or to member health.

The most important consideration when voting this year is that voting yes allows the Board and Organization a chance to implement some changes which could lead to growth and protect against the Ontario threat. If things don’t go well, the members can always vote to cancel the new membership type after a year at next years AGM.

Simply put, voting yes gives us a chance to answer the threat this year and to cancel down the road if we need to, while voting no gives us no opportunity or options to keep RTAM safe.

The budget’s we look to pass later in the AGM will be based on the vote around Education Community Membership. A vote to pass the new membership type is reflected in one of the budgets as we see an increase in revenues and therefor what we can spend on members while growing and protecting the organization. A vote not to pass the new membership type leads to a 20% reduction in revenues and therefor cutbacks which will continue for future years while members leave for Ontario.

We hope everyone votes to give growth a chance and a year for changes to take effect. Please vote yes.

**Financial Stability, Inflation, Consistency Moving Forward**

The other material change we are seeking at this year’s Annual General Meeting is an increase to membership fees. We used to have a great history and tradition of raising fees by $0.25 cents every two years. We got away from this practice in 2017 and then with the pandemic, forgot to come back to our bi-annual increases.

As we all know and have felt personally, the world is becoming a more expensive place to live and do business. The inflation we face can be felt in every aspect of day-to-day life and business functions. Due to the rising costs, RTAM must get back on track with increasing membership fees to offset rising external costs and expenses.

We are asking to raise the membership fee from $3 per month to $4 per month starting with the next budget. This would catch us up on the previous increases that we missed and allow us more flexibility as we manage operations and face challenges. We hope the need to raise fees makes sense as does our history and precedents with member fees. We have more literature on our AGM Page of the RTAM website if you’d like to learn more about this important change. While the impact to each members is less than the price of a small cup of coffee, the combined impact to RTAM is very significant and helpful.

**Technology, Partnerships, Programs**

Late this summer RTAM launched their new website. This helps us (the office and volunteers) as we can now update our website, something which we couldn’t do over the past few years. The ability to make updates and modernize the website in pieces over the coming years will improve our communications and interactions with members while also reducing costs compared to our previous contracts and relationships.

We hope the website becomes a hub of member information in the coming months and years, we also hope to offer the website in French within the next year and possibly even in Indigenous languages in years to come.

We’re also extending our partnerships beyond our website. RTAM will be announcing new partnerships with the Festival du Voyageur, Folklorama and other groups as we head into the new year in addition to partnerships that we just launched, like that with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

Our first two Special Interest Groups are doing well. The French Book Club is meeting regularly and getting into their third novel next month. The RTAM Choir is growing and will be hosting concerts this holiday season, they were recently written about in the Winnipeg Free Press.

All of these partnerships and programs are great signs of growth and increasing member options to remain engaged and active in retirement.

**Reach out and say hello**

The RTAM Board of Directors and the RTAM office love to hear from our members. We take emails to our meetings for review and often learn of new programs, possibilities and partnerships through our conversations. Please always feel welcome to email the Board of Directors, the Executive Director or the office team if you have any ideas or questions you would like to share. Members are also welcome to schedule meetings if they would prefer a face-to-face conversation or a coffee!

Warm Regards,

Sean