

President's Message #12

Narcissus, Photographer

- Erica Jong¹

*Mirror-mad,
he photographed reflections:
sun storms in puddles,
cities in canals,*

*double portraits framed
in sunglasses,
the fat phantoms who dance
on the flanks of cars.*

*Nothing caught his eye
unless it bent
or glistered
over something else.*

*He trapped clouds in bottles
the way kids
trap grasshoppers.
Then one misty day*

*he was stopped
by the windshield.
Behind him,
an avenue of trees,*

*before him,
the mirror of that scene.
He seemed to enter
what, in fact, he left.*

¹ **Erica Jong** (née **Mann**; born March 26, 1942) is an American novelist, satirist, and poet. She is known for her 1973 novel *Fear of Flying*. The book became controversial for its claims towards female sexuality. According to *Washington Post*, it has sold more than 20 million copies worldwide.

Annual State of the Club

Each year at this time I update our membership on the state of our club following the election of new board members at the AGM.

The good news is that there have been no changes to the board. The Vice President, Dennis Crabtree, and the President, James Dies, were both re-elected by acclamation, with no other contenders. The remaining five board members will continue their tenure.

This continuity is crucial as the board has a long list of projects and tasks to complete for the club, ensuring consistent effort towards their resolution.

I take great pleasure in working with this board. They are all enthusiastic and dedicated to further improving our club, which is already one of the best in Canada. Their patience is commendable as they manage the numerous emails I send them daily.

We are strong, growing, and financially sound, experiencing an average growth of approximately 1.1 new members per week since the beginning of the year.

Integrating new members into the club is vital for building and maintaining our membership. The first step involves a personal call from me to welcome them, understand their interests, and determine how they learned about us.

The second step is orientation through Mentorship, managed by Teri Spaven. Mentorship serves to orient new members and assist long-standing members with guidance. Teri's enthusiasm in taking on this role is greatly appreciated.

The third step involves our existing members. If you see a new member who appears uncertain, please approach them and make them feel welcome. You may discover common interests and form new friendships.

Expired members also receive a call to understand why they have not returned. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the club, its members, and our membership fees. Reasons for non-renewal often include health and mobility issues, busy schedules with work, travel, and family, or temporary breaks with plans to return. I maintain a callback list to follow up with these individuals.

I have learned that some non-renewals are interested in film photography, which our club does not currently support. Board member Ron Charles is investigating the possibility of reintroducing film photography to the club, as its popularity has grown by 60% in the past two years among younger photographers. Following Ron's report at the board meeting on May 22nd, we may decide to reintegrate film photography into our offerings to attract new members.

We now have a mascot, currently known as Photo Bear. A naming contest was held at the AGM, and a final name will be selected soon. This mascot, a unique feature among clubs, I think we are the only one, can help garner attention and publicity, and we may use it in promotional materials.

As President, I look forward to serving the remarkable members of this club once again. Although challenges lie ahead, I am confident that together we can overcome any obstacles and achieve success.

Remember, my door is always open.