A Message From the Chairman – June 10, 2020

Fellow Printery Members:

I hope this finds you, your family & friends in good physical and mental health. Hopefully this pandemic will pass you all over and our lives will regain some form of normalcy, whatever that may become.

This communication would usually be announcing an agenda and invitation to the Mackenzie Printery & Newspaper Museum’s 2020 Annual General Meeting. As is so common these past few months, I am postponing our AGM until later this fall, likely sometime in October. Whether this will be a physical meeting or a “virtual” one remains to be seen but it will occur. Our charter requires that we elect our Board of Directors and Executive Committee every two years and this is an election year.

The Niagara Parks Commission has restricted our group’s access to the Printery since March 14, 2020 as they have all public admission to any of their facilities. In a recent conversation with Jim Hill, our head NPC contact, he tells me that they are aiming for a July 1st public opening. There will be the now customary restrictions but even those are at this time unknown. I am not confident that this goal will be met which will continue to restrict our access to the Printery until such time as the NPC does open to the public. We will advise when such does occur.

This pandemic landed just as we were poised to begin training seminars for our members and NPC’s site staff, having worked diligently through the winter on completing the Members Workshop in the basement of the Printery. All equipment therein is operational and in their final positions. Type has been sorted, labelled and catalogued with completion of those tasks just days away when we were forced to shut down. It is a great disappointment to those dedicated volunteers who have worked so hard on this phase of the project that the finish line was and remains insight but is currently unobtainable.

Covid 19 has also cancelled three of our annually attended events. The Grimsby Wayzgoose fell victim in April as has the annual Marshville Heritage Festival. Presumably the recently annualized Howard Iron Works Book Fair, usually a late September event, has also fallen victim. They are all normally well attended and enjoyed by those of us who participate. Importantly they also provide most of our yearly operating costs through our sales and new memberships that are generated at each. We are however in a good financial position currently having had a number of positive cash flow years of late.

It appears that 2020 will continue to be a challenging year for us all. The future is always impossible to predict but my belief is that for the majority of us and the normal functioning of our society, it’s going to be a “hit pause to all” and wait until the calendar turns to 2021. We will certainly let you know as things change but for the time being, stay safe and practice your newly learned physical distancing skills so that when this finally blows over, we can resume in earnest.

Best wishes & good luck!

Ron Schroder, Chairman
Mackenzie Printery & Newspaper Museum