

President's Report 2019

Good evening everyone! I know how difficult it can be to make time for just about anything, so I really appreciate it. Another year has come and gone and here I stand to give another short summary of the year gone by and a rough outline of the year to come. Let's just jump into it, shall we?

Arguably the most significant updates were technological in nature.

First, our Senior Program Manager, Mark and web designer/developer, Sandy Feldman worked together using the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to make our website palreading.org accessible. A massive thank to them for their hard work.

Second, all of the computers we use to record have been upgraded and the network has been changed so that recording, saving and transferring files has been streamlined to increase efficiency without losing any of the quality you have come to know and love.

Ideally, these two changes will make things a lot easier for our clients and our staff, respectively. It definitely is a lot less embarrassing for all of us now, because we can direct friends, family, patrons and clients to the fully accessible website.

In terms of governance, we made a few tweaks here and there. These include updating old policies and putting new policies in place (privacy policy, health and safety policy, reserve policy, financial management policy and complaints policy). The board definitely burned the midnight oil to get this done relatively quickly and I thank them for their diligent work on this.

Admittedly, even though the board busted its tail trying to get everything in order, not all the governance issues were a success. One of the failings, and that is mostly on me as the chair, is that we did not review the bylaws in order to bring them up to date as I had hoped to. This year I hope to rectify this.

Susan and Mala have been making some decent headway in compiling a history of PAL, interviewing a number of past presidents, board members and clients. We are unsure when there will be a finished product, but I am looking forward to it when it is.

As usual, we took part in a few major events to increase awareness and visibility in the community; the Balance Fair, the Toronto Challenge, the Great Canadian Giving Challenge, Word on the Street and the White Cane Week Expo. Again, thanks to you all and all our friends and family, we ended up raising our goal of \$20,000 and of course, this year it was tripled by our angel.

We will most certainly be returning to the Toronto Challenge again in 2020. In 2019, most of our board members made it to the event. Jennifer and Dalton can tell you how much fun it was. We will be participating in the Great Canadian Giving Challenge again as well. So, come June I hope to see you all out there walking, waving the PAL flag and, if I may be so bold, shaking your friends and family down for a bit of help.

The Holiday party was lots of fun last year and it will be again this year. So bring your ugly sweater, your singing voice, and your spirit this December. No hum-bugs allowed!

We sometimes have our doubts about what we are doing and where we are going. However, our clients continue to send in books and positive feedback about the quality and the warm human element our recordings hold. So, as long as the books keep coming, we will continue to strive for excellence.

As usual, I want to extend a most heartfelt thank you to all the clients who keep us busy, the board who keep us on the straight and narrow, the patrons who keep us afloat and of course, the staff who work tirelessly to keep us going every day. Derek and Mark, without you, this ship might well have sunk a long time ago. Every last person who interacts with PAL in any way, thank you all.

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.” - William Arthur Ward.