

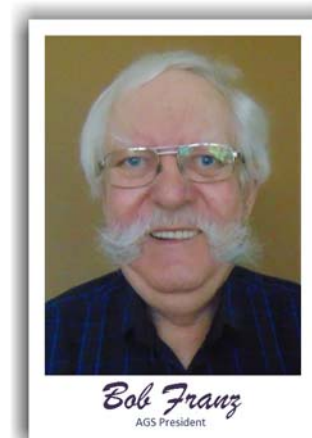


## The President's Message

October 2017

### Long, long ago, in another life in another

volunteer organization, the IRA, I was the membership chairman on the provincial executive. Besides helping the membership chairs in the branches throughout the province, I was responsible for promoting membership in the organization. No, not the Irish Republican Army → The International Reading Association. The association has since changed its name to the International Literacy Association, and there no longer seems to be a provincial branch. As the Membership Chair, I stressed that *if you wanted to keep and*



*increase members, it was essential that the organization only give members benefits they really want and use. Members want to see their membership fees to benefit the organization rather than to provide something they see as a gimmick, or to go the easily-criticized and dreaded ADMINISTRATION. The second key to maintaining members that I touted was to communicate with them, keeping them in touch with the organization. Their reasons for being a member may be diverse, but letting them know what is*



- ① Give members what they want
- ② Give good communication
- ③ Give good customer service

happening and of opportunities to get involved is essential if they are to feel part of the community. And lastly, I stressed that it is key to give your members good customer service. Staff, and members, must treat each other with respect and courtesy. That includes responding promptly whether it be by phone, Email, letters, journals or websites. Members need to know they are valued besides what the organization is doing on their behalf.

**So what has brought this on?** The years have flown by and this is a totally different organization with a totally different agenda, but, surprise, the basic tenets are still the same. When I assumed the presidency of this society, I heard many negative things about it including a disconnection with the membership. Almost a year and a half has passed, and I recently requested input from the members regarding the services they are receiving and services they

are not receiving. Guess what? I discovered that it was felt that this organization is .... Nothing was perceived to have changed though I thought we had made great strides in addressing those early issues of discontent!

**So, it is back to step one.** Members and branches have been consulted and feedback on services has been provided. The Board of Directors met the third weekend of September and engaged in a detailed discussion on that input. The first week of October that input is being farmed out to the executive officers and to the chairs, provincially and locally, seeking their direction on how we can increase and improve the benefits and services provided to members. I thank each and every one of you for your responses and your candidness, and I now ask for your help, and your patience, as we address those benefits and services. I do believe that this is a different society than the one I joined five years ago, and that we are improving and progressing. I also believe it is time that we take a serious look at what we are doing and how we can better address the needs and wishes of today's genealogist.



**And so today we begin a critical assessment of our present services:** our provincial and branch libraries and resources, our research services, our databases, our Journal *Relatively Speaking*, our AGS and Branch Websites, our biennial conference and GenFair, our branch workshops, our membership services, the retreat, our awards service, our coordination and communication services, our Canada 150 Youth Workshops, our administrative services at the provincial and branch levels, our overall structure, our wellness, and services still to be initiated. All respondents recognized that there is but one AGS with programs and services provided by all its components, and all respondents supported this concept. We have and are doing great things and together, we can do even better.



This is Bob. Let me know what you think.

*Robert "Bob" Franz*

AGS President