2018 President's Report

2018 was a year of big changes for Renaissance Lac Brome. Our organization is in excellent financial condition and our influence continues to broaden. In April we obtained the services of a regular employee, biologist Ms. Anaïs Renaud, made possible by continued financial support from the Town of Brome Lake and through a service agreement with the OBV-Yamaska. Ms. Renaud engaged actively in Renaissance activities through the 2018 season until the beginning of her maternity leave. During her absence she is being replaced by agronomist who is ensuring continuity of ongoing activities and has participated in the hiring of two students for the summer of 2019. These changes allowed the Renaissance office to be open four days per week from April through mid-September and then three days per week through the end of the season and provided support to the board members’ involvement in Renaissance projects.

The Renaissance board changed significantly through 2018 as well. Former president Michel Delorme, active on the board for eight years did not pursue a new mandate in May. Patrick Binckly joined the board in the spring, followed by Christian Roy and Lise Clément who were named at the annual meeting in May.

Secretary Pierre Beaudoin and his wife Francine Duclos-Beaudoin moved out of the area in July and resigned from the board after over twelve years of involvement. Gary Richards, board member for the last eight years, resigned from the board in the fall when Normand Degré, Yves Léveillé and Denis Ruest joined the board. As president I can attest to the enthusiasm and dynamism of your board of directors who are ready to continue the work on our important activities.

In 2018 Renaissance, in conjunction with the Town of Brome Lake, continued the second year of a five-year shoreline restoration program around Brome Lake, planting 1,500 shrubs on participating properties. We are working on a revised approach to encourage more participating in this program which aims to protect our lake at a minimal cost to property owners.

Water quality continued to be monitored through the 2018 season with twelve measurements of water clarity, (“Secchi”). The water remained clear to at least three meters until mid-August when a first episode of cyanobacteria bloom was observed. Although the Environment Ministry was informed the lake remained open to boating through the summer. There was a second appearance of green surface bacteria around the 13 of September and a third episode in November, which is unusually late. The lake froze the third week of November, earlier than in the last few years.
We made eight outings to monitor water quality, with samples taken through the summer by director Pierre Fortier, accompanied by Ms. Renaud and our summer student. Additionally, samples were taken and measured for calcium, a limiting factor for the development of zebra mussels. Although we observed a slight increase in calcium content the lake remains marginal with respect to supporting these invasive mussels. The subject of exotic invasive species will be a feature of the 2019 annual general meeting, with a presentation by Ms. Hélène Goodmaire who is an expert in the field.

We were disappointed to learn that the pilot project to harvest invasive red crayfish could not be pursued in 2018 as the request from chef Arnaud Rohr, of the Pérousse restaurant, had been refused. The provincial Environment Ministry blocked a fresh water commercial fishing license that would allow harvesting, preparation and serving these crayfish. Following this refusal, the Forest, Wildlife & Parcs Ministry ("MFFP") requested that crayfish samples be taken in the Yamaska river, the Quilliams creek, the Coldbrook and in Brome Lake and we sent specimens to the Ministry labs in Longueuil in August. This was followed up with DNA sampling by Ministry biologists at the end of September in order to develop an environmental DNA approach for detecting and monitoring the species.

Renaissance continues to be involved in initiatives to improve runoff control from Tibbits Hill and Mountain and the MRC took over the lead of this major project in the fall of 2018. This joint project with the Town and MRC will proceed in 2019 and be extended to address issues on St-Jude and des Alizées streets.

The report on walleye in the lake has been delayed but should be available and be presented to the MFFP shortly after which we are anxiously expecting the Ministry’s recommendations with regards to fishing in our lake.

Renaissance has begun a study with regards to boating which will include consideration of control of invasive species (washing), access at Tiffany Beach and circulation on the lake. Members of the board have met with organizations from lakes Memphremagog and Massawippi to learn from their initiatives to date. We updated the inventory of boats around the lake, motorized and others. A team spend two days photographically documenting the shoreline around the lake and boats located on each property. We also accepted an invitation to visit shoreline plantings on farms and at the St-Benoit Abbey from the Regroupement des Associations Pour la Protection de l'Environnement des Lacs et des bassins versants (« Rappel »). At the end of October we also participated in workshops held by Nature Quebec.

On the administrative side, we undertook updating of our bylaws and regulations as well as developing a formal code of ethics for the board of directors. These will be submitted for members’ approval at the annual general meeting following adoption by the board.

Two years have passed since I became president of the Renaissance board of directors. I am supported in this huge task by board members who make every effort to move forward with the many important files under our responsibility. In conclusion, Renaissance is in good hands and we all take the health of our lake to heart.