

## Registrar's Corner

This document is a collection of Frequently Asked Questions, and more useful – Answers, which were written by Lynn Douglas and originally appeared in the Ontario Unit's Trillium Newsletter.

### *Why does the Unit have an event registrar?*

The position of event registrar is a quite recent addition to our Unit. Previous to the creation of the registrar position, it was part of the role of the hosts to handle the registration duties. However, hosts were finding it more and more onerous to have to handle registration as well as run an event. Those of you who have been hosts know that there is enough to do at an event without having to worry about money coming in and out. It was actually becoming more difficult to find members who were willing to take on hosting an event because of the registration duties that went along with hosting. Also, there were some problems with consistency as who paid what, refunds and accurate accounting of members' money. The position of registrar was created to try to lighten the role of hosts and ensure that there is more accountability for Unit funds. New banking rules in the past two years would make it very difficult now to go back to the old system. There are now quite a number of steps that have to be taken to set up a bank account for a recreational club like ours, such that it would be almost impossible for hosts to do so for each separate event.

### *What is involved in planning a rally or rendezvous?*

The registrar's job is very much intertwined with that of the hosts as everything the registrar does is done to meet the needs of the hosts and, of course, the Unit. The Registrar first becomes involved in an event at the coupon development stage. The hosts have the task of determining how to charge for an event. This is rather tricky because the fee is based on a best guess as to how many units will attend the event and the anticipated costs. The executive has drawn up guidelines for hosts but it is for the hosts to decide in the end on what number of units to base the fee. The hosts must then determine their costs for breakfasts, a catered dinner and entertainment, snacks, door prizes and any other costs they might have (again guidelines have been developed based on past events). Hosts try to keep the gap between the fee and estimated costs very close at this planning stage.

Once the hosts have a draft coupon, they send it to me to make sure I have all the information I need. In addition to your trailer unit and names, I also need to know your trailer number and length (for the parkers), any special needs (parking, diet, electricity), if you want to attend the dinner and if you want to stay extra nights. I enter all this information on a spread sheet from which I can generate parking, attendee and dinner lists and keep track of money coming in and out. When I first started as registrar, I thought I could inform everyone that I had registered them for an event. But I soon found that I just couldn't keep up over the busy rally and rendezvous season. However, if you would feel more comfortable, I would be glad to confirm your attendance if you e-mail me asking for confirmation. I deposit cheques in our bank account in batches as we are charged for each deposit (so don't be surprised if you don't get your cashed cheques back very quickly).

A word on deadlines for registration - As I noted above, the hosts set the fees for an event on the basis of an estimate of the number of units that will attend the event. The hosts need to know exactly what number of units will actually attend to know how much money they have to spend. There is a lot of nail biting for hosts when numbers are not reaching the minimum needed to break even by the deadline date. Some costs are fixed, the site rental and entertainment, for example, and hosts must decide at the deadline date how much they have left to spend on breakfasts, snacks and door prizes, etc. (The deadline date also coincides with the date the caterers need final numbers for dinner.) It is very frustrating to everyone if the hosts have to scramble and scale back on the non-fixed expenses only to find they have an unexpected surplus in the end because of late registrations. The number of late registrations is actually getting to be quite a problem. So please think of our hard-working hosts and register early.

*Why do you have to register again at an event?*

I have been asked numerous times why everyone has to register again at an event. If you asked me this question, you must have been someone who made no changes to the information on your registration form. However, and this came as quite a surprise to me, between 30% and 50% of those who come through the registration line at an event ask for a change to their registration information. The most requested change is to add or subtract extra nights but also to cancel or ask for dinner tickets. Sometimes I owe people money or they owe me money. I am pleased to try to accommodate all changes but ask that you be patient when waiting in line. The changes mean cash changing hands, with attendant receipts (invaluable for me when trying to balance the books).

After registration, it is time to make sure the cash I have taken in matches the amount of money my books tell me I should have. Sometimes in the confusion of registration, I miss something (despite noting that I owe or am owed money in three different places). If I short change you, please let me know so I can give you what I owe and balance my books. And if I don't catch that you owe me, please forgive me if I turn up at your trailer door looking for money!

*Why do you have to pay cash at an event if you register late?*

Hosts must provide me with receipts for all their expenditures and I try to pay all the hosts' expenses right at the Rally or Rendezvous so the hosts are not out of pocket for any longer than necessary and so I can close the books on an event before starting a new event. (Hosts may also request an advance from registration fees already paid for pre-event expenses.) It is because I have to pay out so much money at an event that I have to ask you to pay cash if you register late. Funds take five working days to clear the bank and I don't want to take the chance of a cheque to the caterers, entertainment or hosts bouncing!

As with all the Unit's financial records, the Registrar's books are audited once a year and the results are presented at the Annual General Meeting. I keep a \$300 float to pay for bank

charges, cheques, postage, etc. but any funds over the float amount are repaid to the Treasurer. My books are available at any event for anyone to look at, if they wish.