

Convenor's Report

4th Annual General Meeting

19 March 2008

Submitted by: Gord DeVillers

I was welcomed to the Sadleir House team as Convenor in the first days of October 2007. I was fortunate enough to have at my hands a system of booking procedures and fee structures developed with care and experience, and in no need of major changes. My immediate task became to position myself as the go-to person for all booking enquiries in the house, a task that had been previously performed by both the Steward and our OWSP staff in the absence of a dedicated convenor.

I endeavoured to make Sadleir House as welcoming as possible, and take pride in the fact that our staff were able to accommodate nearly every booking request that came into our office. If an event was not booked it was because there was no room in the house, and the organizers could not be flexible with their dates. When the House is full, the feeling that something special is happening here is at its strongest. I like to think that the experiences I have gained during my five months as convenor will help Sadleir House to shape the role of convenor, and aid in the development of booking policies and fee structures.

Much of our fee structure had been decided before my arrival, and so it was left to me to monitor its use and determine how effectively it was meeting the needs of our users. The structure consisted of: \$20/hr charge to individual uses unaffiliated with any community group, looking to use the house for private functions such as parties, or for commercial uses such as dance classes or yoga classes; \$15/hr charge for not-for-profit groups such as community organizations (e.g. COIN, Kawartha Ploughshares, Religious Society of Friends, KYO), or government and academic department usage; \$10/hr for large-levy student groups (e.g. OPIRG, Trent Radio, Trent Annual, Arthur); \$8/hr for small levy (e.g. TQC, KWIC, Trent Film); \$5/hr for non-levied student groups (e.g. Anne Shirley Theatre Company, Trent Equestrian Club, Trent Latin Swing Dance Club). Where more latitude is necessary in the fee structure is in the \$5/hr category. Groups calling themselves 'working groups', who are usually break off groups affiliated with OPIRG or TQC, and unregistered non-levied student groups come to the house expecting the \$5/hr charge. Our solution has been to give them the \$5 rate instead of losing them as customers, since they do not have the organizational funding to pay \$15/hr. for the community group rate. However, I do think we need to broaden our eligibility requirements for this rate, perhaps calling it something other than non-levied student rate. Dwayne and I have had some interesting discussions into opening up a room of the Senior Common Room as a no-frills bookable space for these small groups with limited resources.

Part of my responsibility as convenor was to generate statistics that monitored house usage for each month, and to break down usage across categories such as room used, usage by billed group type, and usage by tenant type. I have set up a spreadsheet that can be easily updated each month and provides our administration with one comprehensive document that has all relevant information centrally located. The data can be easily manipulated to answer usage enquiries cross referenced across the sets indicated above.

Systems:

Google calendar: is now our main tool for tracking bookings. It has been linked to our public calendar on our website, and we can specify which events can be seen by the public, and which by staff only. Advantages of this system include quick access, remote availability, and centralized information. This system allows staff to quickly access any date and to give immediate answers to walk-in or phone-in enquiries as to specific date and room availability enquiries.

Security: Due to recent security concerns the House has implemented new strategies to ensure the safety of both the property and persons of Sadleir House staff and tenants. New measures include a locked drop box for payments in the office, and a list of opening, mid-shift, and closing procedures that staff must sign-off on after each round.

Bookings:

Conference booking: This is an exciting new avenue for Sadleir House events, which has the potential to bring many new people into the house, often providing experiences that show the House at its best, that is full of action and serving the community. This year we have had two conferences both of them attracting international participants: a conference on ethical purchasing, and another on developing community activism. Both conferences involved much planning, and a need for Sadleir House to stay flexible as the organizers worked to define their needs. Working around our recurring Sunday afternoon bookings was an issue for both events, forcing both conferences to wrap up a little earlier than planned. However, the overall experience for conference organizers, attendees, and House staff was positive. I have a feeling that the hard work and success of these events will lead to more organizers considering Sadleir House as a conference venue.

Birthday parties and department socials: We have had quite a few successful private parties so far this year. They have been very lucrative for our bar, and have been easy to manage since all guests are invited, and there is a general sense of conviviality at these events that lessen security concerns and incidents. Some of the more successful parties involved musical acts like Slips and the High Fives or high-calibre djs travelling from Ottawa and Toronto to work their magic.

General Space Usage: Sadleir House has seen all kinds of activity in ye_08. Here is who have been through this year: Ontario Public Interest Research Group, Kawartha World Issues Centre, Sociology Department, Ninth wave Enterprises, Kawartha Youth Orchestra, Trent Film Society, Vera Jones' yoga, Steph Park's Yoga (2 weekly sessions), Charlene Shipps's Yoga and Adam Prinsen's Yoga, Travelling World Community Film Festival, CUPE 3908, Disorientation Week, Horizons of Friendship, Graduate Students Association, Otonabee College Cabinet, Peterborough English Country Dancers, TQC, Doors Open Peterborough, Uranium Mining Information Session, Latin Furour Dance Class, Trent Annual, Peterborough Life Drawers, Champlain College Cabinet, PAU, Women's Studies, ACO, Trent International Program, Arthur, In From the Cold, TUFA, Fleming College Museum Management, Transmissions, The Hoop Revolution, Trent Radio, Seeds for Justice, Searchlight Theatre, Trent Equestrian Club, Trent International Socialists, Trent Latin Swing Dance Club, Council on Race Relations, Cultural Studies, COIN, Park Place for Youth, Milkweed pre-School, Religious Society of Friends, the Mandolin Orchestra, Scottish Country Dancers, AMINNS, the Housing-Coop, PFLAG, English Department, Green-UP, and no doubt a few others I have missed. This list is a veritable who's who of Not-for-Profit and community based activism and activities in Peterborough: proof positive of Sadleir House's vitality and of its important role in the community.

Liquor License:

Our liquor license is no longer the issue it once was. Our Caterer's Endorsement has been working well, allowing us to setup our bar not only in the Dining Hall, but occasionally in Hobbs for licensed events in that space. We are currently considering licensing the entire house on event by event basis, with our first attempt being for the John Watlin birthday party scheduled for the end of April.

Equipment:

Audio/Visual: Our performance audio gear in the Dining Hall is currently in a state of flux as equipment that had been on semi-permanent loan by Jill Staveley is to be removed at some point. Jill and John Muir are currently assessing the condition of amplifiers, mixing boards, equalizers and the cabinet speakers owned by Sadleir House, and making repairs where possible. We experienced a recurring crackle somewhere in the audio mix early last autumn, and, while scheduling repairs, we began to use the Yorkville powered speakers when possible. The simplicity of using these speakers allowed us to easily provide sound gear to some events that did not require the full service of an audio tech. For example, if an event was looking to simply use a laptop to play music, the speakers would be setup, Sadleir House staff would set the levels, and no staff was charged with watching over the sound board for the evening. Now that we have speakers and an amplifier by the kitchen door, events with minimally challenging music requirements, such as playing straight from a portable music player, can plug into the amp. As a courtesy Sadleir House could stand to have a few miniplug to rca adaptors on hand, since guests rarely come equipped with them and are often disappointed to discover they require them.

our equipment Includes: 2 x SM58, 2 x SM57, 2 x Apex DI Boxes, XLR cables, 4 x mic stands, 2 x Tannoy Monitor speakers (lecture hall), VCR (OPIRG), DVD (in conjunction with Trent Film), Projection Screen – Dining Hall (In Conjunction with Trent Film), Projector (In Conjunction with Trent Film), Projection Screen – Lecture Hall (is not in great condition), Overhead Projector, 2 x Television (one is not yet fully functional for video), CD player (one disc tray), 16 channel Snake , 2 x Yorkville powered Monitors , CD player (multiple disc), 4 Par 38 lighting fixtures , 4 – 8 channel lighting dimmer box , extension cords & power bars, and a new amplifier, dvd/cd player, and speakers in place above the kitchen in the Dining Hall.

Furniture: Our furniture is well used and is in high demand by our event planners. With the exception of the rolling chairs living in the link, all of the house's seating is used on a regular basis. It was a coup for the house to receive approximately 30 more chairs at the end of February. These chairs were fitted with rubber feet to make them available for use in Hobbs and the Dining Hall. We can currently provide seating for almost eighty in the Dining Hall. Our supply of tables is used regularly, particularly by the 'By the Bushel' crew, who turn the Lecture Hall into a production room for their weekly hamper filling routine. Dwayne has gone to lengths to clear the furniture from the back of the Lecture Hall, and the space can now accommodate more seating, almost 70 closely placed chairs, for a/v presentations. The House is still in need of some portable coat racks that can be placed in the foyer by the door to the Lecture Hall or by the North Entrance for large events in the Lecture Hall. However, there are the coat racks outside of the SCR that have seen much use this winter.

OWSP Employees:

We have been extremely fortunate with our OWSP staff, who have shown dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to Sadleir House, and who have not hesitated to approach us with their needs, concerns and ideas. Sincere thanks to Laura Perry, Robin Smith, Nicholas Ferrio, and Ryan Perk. A special thanks go to our short notice event staff of Cindy Manlow and Sarah Mackillican who both came through in various staffing pinches.

In considering the last 6 months I see a busy, vibrant time for the house, full of activity, and pushing our staff to further define and refine what it is we do best. People come to the house to be a part of a community, that not only meets at the house, but is, in an important way, aided in existing because of the house. It has been only 4 years, but already the PRCSA and Sadleir House have reclaimed its proud and important role in Peterborough's exciting cultural scene. Keep up the good work!

Gord DeVillers
Sadleir House Convenor
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