Board Report

Membership

The annual renewal process is proceeding normally, thanks to the efforts of the Membership Support Group. As some of you may know, I had a personal problem recently. I had three sons, the middle one of the three passed away from Covid 19 complications on Thanksgiving morning, and I had to take a major amount of time to clear-up personal matters. The crew continued their work while I was engaged on other efforts and have kept up with the flow of renewals. We are well ahead of last year's rate, even though we do still have some renewals that have not yet been processed.

I want to enter my personal thanks to Steve Siegerist and Mary Birdsell, both of the St Louis Chapter, who have kept the process on track even with my absences. I have mostly kept the PayPal renewals going and they are currently as up to date as ever – all, through last week are entered and I enter each week, the following week.

We are behind in the effort to develop a new Software program for the Society. I simply had no time to devote to it until the last week or so. I am now trying to establish the current position and understand what we still need to do. Our current system is not good enough. I have a couple of labels that I have gotten back through the Post Office where the printed address does not match what is in our database. The city name is repeated in the street name – and the Post Office can't deal with that.

We need a better system – and unfortunately there are not many available. Most of the smaller systems (like our current vendor NEONCrm) are best able to handle groups up to 1,500 to 2,000 members, they simply don't deal with bigger groups very well. The bigger systems (like SalesForce) are very expensive. The quote we got from one of their Applications Adaptation Enterprises was for about $35,000 to get us set-up and then an annual fee of about $20,000 to $25,000 for up to 7,500 members (we are currently at about 5,300 and growing).

I will be working with our current Webmaster (Webmistress?) Dawn Holmberg and the consultant that has built our current website Trishah Woolley. These two highly competent young ladies have put together a superior website and have made it work well with PayPal. Now we need to add the storage and search capabilities so we can move away from Neon. The trouble is that this looks like being expensive. While we have quotes for other web sites of between $15,000 and $30,000, we seem to be looking at the upper end of the range for a comprehensive web-based system of our own. If any Board Members can offer lower cost alternatives that we haven't already considered, please let me know and I'll be happy to talk with them.