

Naturist Legacy Fundraising Report for 2012

It was April, 2010. Crocus Grove Sun Club had just learned that we had lost our home of forty years. The club executive was meeting in emergency session. All were devastated by the news. Tears were shed, memories were exchanged, and concerns were shared. It all seemed a little too much like a funeral or a wake. People were rattled to the core, and nothing looked other than dark. Everyone tried to be positive, but inwardly most felt that landed social nudism in Manitoba had just died.

The future looked bleak. The club had only about \$12,000 in the bank. What could anyone do with such little money? One board member suggested that maybe the club could meet on Patricia Beach a few times a year. Many around that table seemed resigned to the idea that the club would never again have a permanent home.

But not everyone shared that view. Where most saw doom and gloom, there were those with business skills who saw opportunity. To them, that \$12,000 was not all that we had, but was actually seed money to grow something new. Where others saw limitation, they saw opportunity. I remember that John and I started to toss around some pretty grand ideas that night. People around that table must have thought that we had both just cracked. I am sure I saw Rita slowly reaching for her cell phone to call the nice men in white coats! Eventually they began to catch on to what we were talking about, everyone started to catch the fever that John and I were suffering, and a new enthusiasm was born. Even though some around that table may not have fully understood what we were talking about, and even though some were not fully convinced that it would work, hope began to rise in peoples' hearts. People began to learn from what we offered, and with that, they began to find their input and experiences to share. Before the meeting was over, the basic core of the Legacy Project had been born, and we were on our way back from the brink of disaster.

With that Boards support and encouragement, John and I brainstormed through all hours of the night, for days and weeks on end. From endless hours of research and debate we gradually honed our plan. We continued to bring plans and ideas and concepts back to the Board, and from them seek support and input. In the end, only a small portion of that original \$12,000 in seed money was needed to generate more than \$200,000 worth of investment in our new home -- Naturist Legacy Park. That's what people with business backgrounds can do in action. We saw opportunity and potential where most others would have seen limitations or the end of the road. It's those business skills that have brought us back from the abyss, and that have established our new home. It's those business skills that have earned the trust of the membership to properly care for their investments -- large and small -- and to use them to utmost advantage in order to ensure our immediate and long-term success.

From the membership we found the trust that those skills are there to see that all of our investments, both big and small, are properly cared for and used to the utmost advantage in order to have success. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you for that trust, and for the constant encouragement I hear so often, to keep going, and to keep working.

What we have carved out of the forest, and what we have managed to create is a marvel in itself, and I hope will be a haven for naturists for generations to come. Without the overwhelming support and generous financial contributions from the membership, and the implicit trust in our ability and skills to make this all work, none of what we see at Naturist Legacy Park would be there today. We have come a long way out of the abyss of exile from our old home, and now have a Park to fully enjoy that will never be taken away from us by others again. If you really look hard at what we have today, the only people that can stop this great venture and kill social nudism in Manitoba is ourselves. We alone will either make it, or break it, so it is all completely in our hands now, and our responsibility to make it a success. We must operate our new home to the highest standard possible. We must find and groom the best of the best, those with strong identifiable business skills, to manage what for us now is no longer a social club, but a true standing corporation, with assets and liabilities, tax issues, and legal issues, and the list goes on. If we fail this time, there will be no one else to blame but ourselves. Nothing is ever permanent. If you take your eyes off the prize, if you rest when you should work, if you stop taking all this seriously, we are destined to fail.

We were fortunate that the winds of those days brought the right people in place, and we were fortunate that members were there with understanding and trust, and you turned that trust over in hopes of a better tomorrow. Well, that tomorrow came. But it did not come easy. The do or die mantra, the “failure is not an option” mentality, coupled with the support of the people around that Board table, gave birth to the Legacy Project, and now Naturist Legacy Park. But all of this comes with a clear warning: if you tamper with the model that helped us arrive, you risk it all. We have a formula that works, it is proven every time you drive in that Park gate. You can ignore the advice from those who made that gate happen, but to what end? Why would any one person risk it? Have we already forgotten 2010?

The Boards business practice of only building what we can pay for, taking no loans, and spending every penny only once where ever possible, has allowed a great deal of development again this year, as clearly stated in the Financial Report. We began the spring with some significant capital projects in front of us, and we did see each one to completion and then some.

However, fundraising and the methodology of using sound business principles do not just cover building structures and paying bills, and it not just resides at the Board level. It rests with all of us, as in today, where we as members sit and vote on key business issues and mandates for our much-cherished Park. In all that we do, in all that we decide, the overwhelming motivation must be the success and immediate survival of Naturist Legacy Park, first and foremost. No amount of money in the bank, or raised, will counter poor decision-making and actions. We have all come together, from exile and oblivion, committed, not only our time and hard broken backs, but we have reached deep into our own personal pockets and found over \$209,000 to make this opportunity a success. There are people here that have thousands upon thousands invested in this new home, in money to the Park, but on top of that, in homes and cottages, in new trailers, and the list goes on. We must owe it to ourselves, to not put our own personal interests, to not put our personal agendas ahead of the greater good, but to open our minds to the realities of what we have before us, to really listen, and listen hard, to the facts and not the urban myths or the rumors, or the old ways. It is time for us all to be in the “here and now”, to deal with

what is real today, the truths, the facts, and to look at what will be the foundations of a better and solid tomorrow. To do that, we must all find a way to think about what is best for the business of Naturist Legacy Park first. Other issues will need to wait in line. If we do not survive first, then what will have been the point? This is the thought process that the Board use's in all that it does. This is the plan and the path to survival. This is the journey to success.

This year several members adopted projects that held meaning for them, and on their own initiative, went out and reached out to fellow members, raising the funds to see those projects addressed. I am speaking of the graveling of the primary roadways, and the building of the sundeck structure within the pool enclosure. This generated \$7000 of unexpected funds to keep us busy and benefit the whole membership as a result. It is those single efforts that I now believe may be the force in future improvements to the Park. So to that end, if a member sees or wants a project that they wish to adopt, please talk to the Board, and we will work with you to realize your goals.

Our development is not just about the fundraising. It is also about the manpower, the labour to create what we have and what we still wish to acquire. No money to fund, no problem, labour is valuable as well, and we can always use a helping hand, not for just what we are working on, but on independent projects throughout the Park. Those labour but no cost projects add great value and are well worth the work to make them happen. The trails development is a fine example of such independent projects, as well as meadow clearing and tree limbing, and grass cutting, wood harvesting, and the list goes on.

New blood brings new money and opportunity. Spread the word amongst your own social circles to recruit new nudists to the membership, for they are the lifeblood of our future, and they bring revenues to the Park. New members must first be adopted into our community fully before they feel comfortable with pay forwards and donations. Invite new faces into your gatherings, and engage them around the pool. Find new friendships with them, get to know them, and everyone will grow as a result. Reach out to new faces and make these new eager people part of our community, then you too will be helping to raise funds by raising loyalty and commitment to the legacy.

I cannot stress this enough, please remember that we are not only a club, but also a community. This is not a business owned by someone else selling us a service, so that they can earn a living. There is no outside party back funding this venture. There is no staff to meet our needs. We are it. We are each other's customers, each other's peers, each other's staff and janitors, grounds keepers, pool boys, each other's friend, each other's support for what we have and what we have yet to achieve. Our own personal actions and efforts not only affect us, but everyone within our community. What we do and how we act and treat our fellow nudists and our Park, will reflect on what we get in return, both individually and as a collective. Take a full garbage bag home from the washrooms or fellow campers, sweep off a deck, water the flowers, clean some chairs and loungers, wipe down the washrooms, cut some grass or trim a few trees. If you can assist us in any way, and do not step forward to volunteer, as an example, you are depriving not only yourself of a great feeling of satisfaction on you contribution, but all of your friends as well, not to mention the entire community, as everyone benefits from each others work and support.

The same goes for financial support. Things will only get done, or improved with financial assistance, and the desire to see the labour go into the project to make it so. If you have it within you to support, please do so, and make the Park better not only for yourself, but for your friends and fellow nudists alike. Once again, everyone will feel the benefit of your support. That is the gift to building a legacy, which is what we are really building here. Please remember that Naturist Legacy Park is greater than any one person, than any one agenda, than any one belief, than any one external cause, and has only one real true goal, and that is to secure a home for nudism for us today, but not only just for today, but for ever more.

In the end, this whole venture is much more than just raising money, more than just meeting financial goals and creating buildings. It is more than just pure business decisions and working with officials, and aligning with other groups. Success for our Park is about a belief. A belief that we can pool what we have, not only in money, but what we have in motivation, in labour, in pride, in skill sets, and in trust in others, and in acceptance of each person for who they are, in order to really meet our goals.

As you can see, this “fundraising report”, is not just about the money. It is about raising something of even greater value that paves the way to our success. My personal business mantra has always been to not chase the money. Do the work first, and do it to your very best ability, and the money becomes the automatic reward as a result. Chase the work and the quality, make the product the best it can be, and the money will follow. If we all do the best that we can do, the money will follow as a result through membership growth, and through the desire to fund and build more. Lets raise that belief, that trust, that work, that dedication, that real energy needed to make this all work. I cannot put that value for you on a spreadsheet, or number it out in some sort of mathematical equation in this report. But I can get you to feel it, here in this room today, and when you stand amongst the trees and meadows, when you walk the serene trails, and share joy and friendship as we gather as a group within Naturist Legacy Park.

Be a real part of that legacy and leave your mark, for everyone in our community to see, for the history of nudism in Manitoba, and a positive memory to your friends for a lifetime.

Mark Brown
Treasurer NLI