

Our efforts to introduce more convenient Saturday afternoon winter meetings came to an inauspicious start on the windy and frigid afternoon of January 10th, when what appeared to be the largest group of members and friends to attend a regular T.M.H.S. meeting in many years assembled in the courtyard outside the door of the Marine Museum of Upper Canada. Many of those persons had travelled long distances through wintry driving conditions specifically to attend this meeting.

How were they greeted at the Museum? By being left to freeze in the open or to seek shelter in cars while we waited in vain for over half an hour for someone to unlock the door and admit us to the warmth and comfort of the museum. But that someone never arrived. We had to distribute "Scanner" from a car window (thanks, Viktor, for your help) and send members home with no meeting, no washrooms to use before they hit the road again, and nothing else but our abject apologies for a situation which we could not explain and which caused us untold embarrassment.

And we still cannot explain it, because apart from some unapologetic excuses made over the telephone, the only response received from Heritage Toronto (formerly the Toronto Historical Board, operator of the museum), was one sentence in a January 26th letter from the Facility Rentals Manager:

"I am writing to formally apologize to you and your colleagues associated with the Toronto Marine Historical Society for the unfortunate incident on January 10, 1998."

That is it. No explanation. No offer to see what could be done to set matters right. Nothing to assure our members that this will not happen again. And this latter point is one of great concern to us in that this is the second time (albeit over a thirty-year period) that we have been locked out of the museum when a meeting had been arranged.

Your Executive Committee is terribly disappointed by this. Disappointed that the thirty-year relationship between the Toronto Marine Historical Society and the Marine Museum of Upper Canada should mean so little to Heritage Toronto. We followed all the procedures usually made when arranging meetings, and we even checked with Heritage Toronto on the afternoon of the day prior to the meeting and were assured that all was in order. What more could we do?

It is the reputation of this Society that has been damaged, and the confidence of our members that has been shaken. How can we hope to attract members to the meetings we so painstakingly plan if we cannot even guarantee a place for a meeting? It was too late to arrange a change in venue for the remaining meetings of this season, but we must give serious consideration to that possibility unless our renewed efforts produce some reasonable assurance that we won't be left out in the cold again.

And that we never again will have to apologize to our members for the actions (or lack of same) by others.

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THE ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

For those who don't normally read the front page (and yes, we know that it happens!), we would ask that members mark Saturday, May 2nd on their calendars, for that is the evening on which our **Annual Dinner Meeting** will be held aboard the JADRAN on the Toronto waterfront. Full details concerning menu selections, ticket prices, and the feature programme of the evening will appear in the March issue. In the meantime, however, we just ask that you note the date and plan to attend. If you have any doubt about how enjoyable the dinner meetings are, just ask any member who has attended. And come and enjoy the fun this year for yourself!

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