



**NOTL NEWCOMERS CLUB**  
**POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND RATIONALES**  
**REVISED BY THE EXECUTIVE DECEMBER, 2018**

This paper is intended to supplement the **Niagara-on-the-Lake Newcomers Club By-laws** and the **Niagara-on-the-Lake Executive Board, Standing Committee and Convener Positions** by providing background information and previous practices that a new Executive Board can call upon when making decisions related to Newcomer events and issues that arise during its deliberations.

The Club's formally sanctioned By-laws continue to be the governing instruments for the conduct of Club business.

We are an independent, affiliated member of the **National Newcomers Association Canada**.

The **Policies, Guidelines and Rationales** document should be revised and updated from time-to-time to include new issues, solutions, and proven/established practices as they arise.

**ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

- **By-law: Article IV.1**  
**Only residents of NOTL are eligible for membership in the Newcomers Club according to the By-laws. People living outside of NOTL, no matter how close, are not eligible. Members who lived outside the NOTL boundaries and who joined prior to 2017 are still eligible for renewal.**

- **By-law: Article IV.3**

The membership year for the Club shall start on July 1st and end on June 30 of the following year, subject to review by the Board. Executive members had previously agreed that the interpretation of the By-law wording of “retain her affiliation” means that, if a year’s dues are not paid by the end of September, the member is not eligible to rejoin in the future.

***Rationale:** A By-law amendment was approved at the April 2008 AGM to welcome women who have moved to NOTL, since the inception of the Club (1992), and have undergone a recent (last 2 years) “life change” situation. The Executive Board also agreed that they would not actively “police” these registrations. Executive Boards, over a number of years, had discussions related to situations where a woman had either not joined the Club within three years of moving to NOTL, or having once been a member lapsed her membership. The recurring issue was whether or not the Club should allow women to join or to re-join the Club. This issue is specifically directed towards women who have experienced a “life change” situation (death of a spouse, retirement, or divorce, etc.) . The Club is, in fact, a women’s social club with the express objective of assisting women in making acquaintances and helping them integrate into the community. It is also during these particularly difficult times that women need the help and support of other women in their community.*

- **By-law: Article IV.4**

Any amendment to the fees must be accompanied with the supporting comprehensive rationale based on cost analysis and demonstrable need. Anyone joining the Club from February 1 till the end of June pays a reduced fee as determined by the Executive Board (e.g. 50% of the annual fee ). The Executive recommends that fees not be reduced in the future.

***Rationale:** The membership dues were increased for the first time, from \$20 to \$25, by a By-law amendment at the April 2008 AGM and from \$25 to \$30 at the April 2011 AGM. The fee was lowered back down to \$25 at the May 2013 AGM. The fee was increased to \$30 at the May 2017 AGM. Spending had been kept down for the 2012-13 year and more money was being handed to the incoming Executive than in the past 3 years. The Exec. felt that all members benefit from a fee drop, while only those in attendance benefit from subsidies. This rationale was presented to the membership at the AGM and the membership voted in favour of the lower fee. The increase to \$30 was to cover a predicted rise in costs.*

- **A prospective member may attend *Coffee & Conversation* as a guest before joining.**

- **All members will receive a name badge and a membership card upon joining. A new membership card will be issued each year upon renewal.**

**Rationale:** *The management of the name tags previously used was onerous and the Executive decided to convert to a card system for the 2018 year.*

- **Members shall be held financially responsible for any event not canceled by the stated deadline.**
  
- **Scent Awareness Policy: The Newcomers Club adheres to a scent free environment in conformance with the Scent Free policy adopted by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on December 11, 2017. Rationale:** *This policy replaces the scent awareness policy initiated on September 6, 2016.*
  
- **NOTL Newcomers is combined with the Alumnae; there is no separation between the two.**  
**Rationale:** *The club was originally established as Newcomers in 1992 (it had a history as an informal group prior to this). To be identified as a Newcomers group the club had to be a member of National Newcomers Council of Canada and adopt their rules. National Newcomers dictated that active membership in the Club should be restricted to 3 membership years and after that term the member should join the Alumnae Association. Both NOTL Newcomers and the Alumnae struggled with this split. Newcomers couldn't support itself financially, and neither Newcomers nor the Alumnae could get enough participants for programmes or interest groups. Later in the 1990s, NOTL Newcomers broke away from National Newcomers and rejoined NOTL Newcomers to its alumnae. In 2009-10, for insurance purposes, NOTL Newcomers rejoined National Newcomers, who no longer require the two groups to be separate. As NOTL Newcomers grows, there have been further suggestions to separate Newcomers from its alumnae. At the National Newcomers' AGM in October 2012, the theme of the whole meeting was about how Newcomer groups separated from their alumnae, around Canada are failing for lack of membership and finances. NOTL Newcomers is one of 4 healthy clubs, the others being in Victoria, Mississauga and Burlington who have thrived by keeping their alumnae and newcomers together. Winnipeg split their Newcomers from Alumnae a few years ago. Newcomers failed and the Alumnae group is doing well.*

#### **ARTICLE V: MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

- **Since 2011, Executive Board meetings have been held in a Board Room at the new Community Centre .**  
*Rationale:* This was done in order to maintain a business-like atmosphere; to ensure there was room for larger groups when Committee Chairs and other Committee members attended; and to avoid having the “hosts” feel they must make preparations (coffee/tea/sweets) for the meetings. Up until 2007-08, the Executive Board meetings were held in the homes of the Board members (with various Executive Board members agreeing to host the monthly meetings). In 2007-08 and 2008-09, the Presidents decided to hold the monthly meetings in the Virgil Arena (free of charge for community non-profit groups) or alternatively in the Public Library . AGM meetings have been held in recent years in the auditorium of the Community Centre. Each new Executive may wish to consider alternate arrangements.
- **Regular meetings of the Club shall be held from September until May, on dates set by the Executive Board.**  
*History:* Approved in 2015, the policy has been to invite new members to Coffee and Conversation where the Executive will welcome and introduce them to other members. Coffee and Conversation was held in the Epicurean, then moved to the Community Centre in 2016. New members are more comfortable in a public environment than in small groups in members’ homes.
- **Each year the Executive allocates subsidies for refreshments, room rentals, speaker gifts, and prizes at their events, as necessary. Transportation is not subsidized for programmes.**  
*Rationale:* The Newcomers Club has generously subsidized events in the past. Traditionally the Opening and the AGM are fully subsidized. Subsidies for tickets are not permitted for Programmes and Special Programmes.
- **All Programmes and Special Programmes must be approved by the Board prior to promotion to the members.**

#### **ARTICLE VII: DIRECTORS**

- **Historian: The role of “Historian” was discontinued by a By-law amendment in 2011.**  
*Rationale:* Requirement for the role was seen to be no longer necessary. Responsibilities were realigned with Secretary and Public Relations roles. The Historian previously saved items from the Advance, newsletters, membership lists and photos. For some years the practice was to display photos of various events at the monthly meetings.

- **As part of the omnibus By-laws amendments in April 2011, the title of Vice-President Alumnae Programmes was changed to VP Special Programmes.**  
*Rationale: to reflect the current practice of there being no division between Newcomers and Alumnae.*
- **At the May 2017 AGM meeting, the *Vice-President* titles were changed to *Directors*.**
- **The duties have been updated as necessary and are outlined in further detail in an addendum to this document entitled: *Executive Board and Standing Committee Position Descriptions*.**  
*Rationale: Directors are expected to review and understand their responsibilities. Outlines of the principal tasks/duties and time commitment of each Executive Board member are made available to all members for their general knowledge and to encourage them to step forward for nomination for the upcoming year's Executive Board.*
- **The Executive Committee may open a special program to guests. Members may then invite one guest to attend the designated special programme. The guest will not be eligible for any subsidy of the special programme by the Club. When a programme is opened to guests but space is limited, members receive priority.**  
*Rationale: Members often wish to bring their spouse or another guest to special programmes which are usually of general interest. In some cases, these additional participants are important to make the programme feasible.*

### **STANDING COMMITTEES**

The following policies or responsibilities outlined below depend on the circumstances and distribution of duties. Each Executive may wish to review the duties and assign them as needed, among various Executive members.

- **Chairs of the Standing Committees are elected or can be “appointed” by the incoming President.**  
*Rationale: The By-law changes at the May 2013 AGM made Chairs eligible to stand for the position of President. The change was made because the 2013-14 President's position was proving very difficult to fill. It was meant to be a one term change. As a result of the revision of the By-laws at the May 2017 AGM, Chairs of Standing Committees, such as the Search Committee and the National Conference Committee, are no longer*

*eligible to become President unless they are already on the Executive Board. The duties of any position may vary from year-to-year to accommodate the Chairs and Officers.*

### **INTEREST GROUPS**

Interest Groups are the nucleus of the Club. Participating in the Club's Interest Groups is the best way to meet other members of our Club. Interest Group members meet on a regular basis on a wide range of interests (see current list of Interest Groups). The Groups tend to be smaller in number (sometimes having only 10 to 15 members) because the Group members will often take turns meeting in each other's homes. In some cases, members of an Interest Group may decide to constitute themselves as a "continuing" (permanent) group, or have become too large to accept new members. They will then establish a waitlist, leaving the door open for a new Group(s) to be formed with other interested members. All that is needed is an idea and a convenor for an Interest Group to be formed.

- **Members wishing to form an interest group shall submit an application to the Interest Groups Chair for approval by the Executive Board.**

***Rationale:** There have been situations in the past where an interest group idea has been submitted but considered by the Executive Board to be unsuitable for approval or inappropriate given the Club objectives.*

- **No member of an interest group may make a profit from monies collected from other members, e.g. no commissions will be paid, no teaching fees paid and all monies collected over the cost of an activity will be refunded.**

***Rationale:** There have been instances where a group had to be disbanded when it was determined that members were asked to pay for a service which was provided by another Club member (for example, to provide art lessons). This is also to avoid a situation where a club member(s) may be benefiting financially from an Interest Group activity.*

### **PRIVACY AND INTEGRITY**

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- **The Newcomers Club does not promote politics, businesses, charities, organizations or outside communities in order to maintain impartiality and non partisanship as much as possible. Under no circumstance is the membership list to be used or shared for solicitation or recruitment purposes.**
- **The newsletter shall include information only about matters directly relating to the activities of the Club, such as Newcomers' Interest Groups and programmes. Information or promotion about non-Newcomers activities will not be published. The newsletter may include brief entries on items of a general nature to the membership.**

***Rationale:** There are many other electronic and print publications in the Town that provide information and advertisements for the countless activities taking place in NOTL. The newsletter's purpose is restricted to keeping members informed about the Club and its members. In addition to upcoming and recent events, information in the newsletter may include, for example, items about current or amended policies, changes in membership and members' contact details. The draft is reviewed by the Executive, or by up to two officers designated for this purpose, prior to distribution to members.*

- **The Club explains to members why their names, postal and email addresses, and phone numbers are requested. Members are given the choice to keep their contact information private; i.e., not distributed to other members. When members complete the registration form, they indicate their choice and the Club maintains that record. Membership information will only be shared with those members who have agreed to share their personal data.**
- **The Membership Directory and other items containing the personal contact information of general members is not to be published publicly on the Club's website. Such information may only be made available in a secure section of the site accessible solely to members of the Club. PR should ensure that any images on the website don't show members' surnames, and that any references in photo tags or elsewhere are first-name only.**
- **The personal emails and phone numbers of members of the Executive shall not be published in publicly accessible locations such as newspapers and websites. The only exception is that a phone number for the President should be made available on the website and in other places agreed by the Executive.**

***Rationale:** The website has a function for creating generic email addresses for any Executive member of the likely to receive emails on behalf of the Club. Executive members, when appropriate, should all be given the generic email address for their position, and the function should be set up to forward emails from the generic email to the individual's personal email. The website also has a Contact Us dialog box for sending emails to the Club's executive officers. This means there is no need for Club members' personal email addresses to be published anywhere. As fewer and fewer people lack email access, the need to publish phone numbers becomes*

*much less important. All members receive a list containing phone numbers for the Executive. Therefore, in order that non-members can contact the Executive by phone, only one phone number needs to be publicized.*

### **DOCUMENTATION AND SECURITY**

**The 2012-13 Executive Board decided to retain all documentation electronically.**

- **All electronic documentation (and where this isn't available, printed documentation) must be kept for historic purposes.**

***Rationale:** 1992-2004 documentation is stored at the museum. The 2012-13 Executive bought thumb drives for PR, the Secretary, Treasurer and President, in order that these thumb drives can store all current year documentation and be passed on to the following years. The 2016-17 Executive initiated a Dropbox file to store documentation and management of the Dropbox file will be determined by the Executive. Our written archives, (Newsletters and membership lists) but not our photos are being kept by the museum (Accession Number 2004.031).*

- **All access and renewal information such as user IDs and passwords to domain registration sites, website, email software etc. shall be kept in a secure place by the Web Editor and the Secretary. At a minimum a password shall be changed whenever one of these positions changes hands.**

***Rationale:** It's important to maintain a practical balance between security and ensuring continued access in unforeseen circumstances. The Treasurer receives invoices which contain important account information and therefore it makes sense for her also to hold access information on behalf of the Executive.*

- **Past President Binders: Past president binders will be stored in the Niagara Historical Society & Museum, on 43 Castlereagh Street, NOTL.** The current president must build and maintain a "President's Binder". The current President must also maintain the past president's binder and use as a reference. At the end of the president's term, the President must submit the "past, past president's" binder to the museum for the NOTL Newcomers Archival collection.



### PUBLIC RELATIONS

- The newsletter shall be distributed electronically to all members in good standing during the first five business days of the month (September-June). The Membership Chair will forward the current newsletter to newly-enrolled members as part of the Club's welcome. Periodically, print copies are sent to members who do not possess email addresses.
  
- The website shall be updated, in coordination with the newsletter, to ensure members have access to consistent Club news and event information. The website can also be revised for last minute announcements such as cancellation of events due to weather.
  
- The Web Editor, who is in charge of PR, places notices online and in the local newspapers, as required.
  
- Information in community resources should be revised, when appropriate, to ensure they contain current Club information. In publications requesting a description of the Club's activities, the Club President's approval of the wording should be obtained before it is submitted.

1. *Retyped from the original 2004-05 "Policy and Tips" document with additional notes from 2006-07 added – July 18, 2007.*
2. *Revised in July 2009 and formatted as a Policy Guideline Paper.*
4. *Revised in July 2013 to include more recent policies and interpretations related to the By-laws.*
5. *Revised September 2016- added Scent Awareness Policy*
6. *Revised May 2017 – added Past President Binder.*
7. *Revised March 2018 to align with revised Bylaws 2017*