

# Year in Review

2 part Review: Assessing the previous year in terms of goals and results and a review of major activities.

Five Main Goals – Stability, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Growth, Retention, Community

**All either achieved, made progress, or were partially achieved**

- Stability
  - Many changes over the last few years
    - We had had a couple of mass exoduses of veteran volunteers in stages over the previous five years.
    - We were recovering from a downward trend of low recruitment, and thus a rapidly shrinking talent pool. Demoralization.
    - We had undergone major cabinet restructuring the previous year
    - Darren had brought us kicking and screaming into the future
  - YP needed a year of internally focused development to strengthen its working institutions and slough off its excesses
    - We needed to get good at what we were already doing and continue to develop traditional areas of strength while minimizing our weaknesses.
      - Strengths: community, growth, organization, excellent programming
      - Weaknesses: overextended energies and failed projects, burnout, image of YPM, poor retention.
  - Goal Achieved
- Transitioning into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- The goal was to maintain usage of the new tools we had implemented over the last two years (spearheaded by Darren Haber).
    - Tools: Eventbrite, Mailchimp, my committee, wikimanuals.
    - Manuals needed updating – mixed success
    - Keeping abreast of new tools: Mixed success.
- Growth
  - We were still suffering from low recruitment #'s despite the significant growth in numbers from the previous year.
  - Increased recruitment success was a priority:
    - Cabinet was drilled in how to give good school presentations
      - Fun, creative activity that made people comfortable with presenting in front of small-medium sized groups.
      - Emphasis on recruiting from friend pool
        - Our #1 method of recruitment remains word of mouth.
        - Cabinet buy-in is invaluable to recruitment success.
      - Less coercive methods of encouraging cabinet to complete recruitment tasks employed.
        - Stopped relying on what I like to call the YP guilt method.
  - We achieved a significant increase in numbers from the previous year, about a 15% increase in recruitment numbers for Winter Session.
- Retention
  - For some years we had been having issues with retaining senior leadership.

- YP requires many hours per year of invested volunteer work and it has a way of whittling people down over the years.
  - There are many reasons for this but one is that it is just the age group we cater to. The nature of our organization means that we try to retain people in stable activities who are usually going through major transitions in their lives (school, work, growing up, etc)
    - This is especially true at the upper cabinet to executive level
  - We are unable to do anything about the external factors related to this problem
  - The YP side of the problem consists in a hierarchical chain of command that depends on good relations between people to lubricate progress.
    - Without good relationships on Cabinet and good communication between Cabinet and Executive, we have the makings of a disaster year.
    - This organization **DEPENDS** on friendship and community to mitigate natural working tensions that crop up over the work year.
- There have been many years in which we pulled off relatively successful events but alienated people to the degree we had huge purges of senior leadership, a fact that in no way contributed to stability or growth for the organization
- **There are a few concrete ways to help build retention, but 90% of retention is a subtle art, a process that has to be self consciously pursued from day one to help build people up and facilitate smooth relations between members.**
  - It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of this rare ingredient.

- One concrete strategy is the promotion of community, which I've left an entire goal section for to discuss in detail.
  - This goal was achieved in large part. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> time in my YP career that only one new member was elected to the executive, and the first year that not a single member of Upper Cabinet left due to alienation.
- Community
  - One of the reasons I think people are drawn to YP is that it's a community of like-minded people.
  - It's a safe place to grow and develop and have fun with your friends while you're at it.
  - Many people have cited the organization as their refuge, as the place they go to for stability while the rest of their lives are in a state of flux or change, whether that be new opportunities or new challenges.
  - I wanted to build on that value and that unique quality of YP in order to fuel the goals of growth and retention.
    - My hope was that providing top down stability in a structural way while emphasizing a healthy, productive and fun atmosphere would lead to a sense of community that would allow the organization to develop naturally.
      - This sometimes required a frustratingly laissez faire approach to what people did, while paying very, very close attention to how people felt and making sure that when they needed it, they had someone to talk to.
      - Community is an exercise in morale building and encouraging people to get to know each other.
        - This approach is fundamentally in line with the mission statement of the organization.

- People do their best work when they feel they're in a safe environment, when they feel like they are contributing, and when they feel like they are appreciated.
- Achieving the desired results is difficult and measuring success is only possible retroactively, you can only hope that what you're doing is working out for the best and in the best interests of the people you're working for.
  - Strategies
    - Less pressure on one person to organize events but an organic strategy of encouraging natural relationships
      - Axing the Prov.Sec
      - Reabsorbing the duties of the prov.sec into the executive
        - All were responsible for organizing events with their teams
      - Brent and movie nights
      - Groups and events naturally sprang from these strategies:
        - Helpful was the fact that a large number of cabinet were already friends and part of a group (hugely helpful)
        - Some enterprising individuals on Cabinet organized days to go out and have fun independent of Exec leadership
          - This had some mixed results that the Exec should be clear about in future.

- Removed guilt method of making people come out to events. You wouldn't hurt someone's feelings if an event only had a few people.
- Regular check-ins with Cabinet by the premier.
- Executive teams structured in such a way that each team leader took personal care of their group of individuals and made sure their teams were functioning well (each emphasized cohesion and community in their own way).
- **The rest is much harder to define:**
  - Taking the temperature of the room at meetings
  - Leading by example
  - Happy exec, happy cabinet
  - A happy mix of personalities
  - Careful cabinet selection
  - Putting out fires and trouble early
    - You'll never get them all, but you must stay on top of it.
- Goal: achieved

# Events in Review

## Community events

- Worked very well, but need to be defined more for the benefit of new members
  
- Structured Events – alcohol free
  - Bowling
  - Post event events
- Unstructured Events with Exec – alcohol free
  - Movie nights
  - Board game nights (Diplomacy)
  - Whatever else
- Unstructured events without executive or organized by YPM members independently as individuals – none of our business
  - This is a little tricky
    - There is no drinking at official YPM events, and anything an executive says is an official YPM event means that it falls under the aegis of our Code of Conduct and our Bylaws
  - This includes anything from YP goes to the beach which was organized by enterprising cabinet members (where some people were confused about regulations and whether this was being chaperoned by executive staff or not. This also includes the Siloam Mission volunteer outing organized by another enterprising member from the backbench.
    - These events were not official YPM events but may have involved individuals who are staff spending time together as friends and comrades as a natural outgrowth of community building
    - Despite some confusion, this is a very good problem to have.
      - Simply an issue of labeling and YP will be attending to it.

## Speaker's Night

Fort Garry, \$90 admission tickets, \$60 at cost Cabinet tickets, Speakers Bill Blaikie and Peter Miliken, turnout – 60, Room seats 75.

- Despite low turnout this event was a fundraising success
  - We made around ~ \$2000 of profit on this event
    - This was due to Fort Gary facilities, small room, and available speakers
  - A good mix of members, fundraising reps, etc.
    - Most of our profit was on the gap between cost and price of tickets instead of corporate fundraising
- We did not mobilize fast enough to organize this event to get the kind of numbers that would have made it a real success
- Dual purpose: bodies in rooms (a good event where alumni, donors and young members have an opportunity to interact), and making profit for the coming year.
  - In order to make this fundraiser a real fundraiser and not have embarrassingly low numbers, there needs to be a new policy in place to deal with the organizing challenge.
    - Things to Note
      - Burnout
      - Mixed crowd: hard to make exciting for new members and old people at the same time
      - Originally an alumni responsibility which devolved onto the executive
      - Timing

## Spring Session

- Review the history and dismantling of Spring Session
- Explain the efforts at 4H
- Explain new horizons



## Winter Session

- A great success!
- ~70 people in attendance, good debate, no one died.
- Everything we did throughout the year led to the Winter Session
- Bear Pit...meh
- Luncheons...same as ever
- Debate and Bills – excellent. Attributable to Darren Haybeer
- Etc, etc.