

Greetings from the President-Elect

Cover Article

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David Pike (Memorial University)

President-Elect



I became the President-Elect of the CMS as an outcome of the election conducted by the society earlier this year. One of my executive duties will be to periodically write a cover article for the CMS Notes. Since this is the first such article in my new role, let me begin with a brief introduction for those who might not know me well. I obtained a BMath degree in 1992 from the University of Waterloo and then began graduate studies at Auburn University in Alabama. In 1998 I joined the faculty at Memorial University of Newfoundland where I am now a University Research Professor. My academic research interests are generally centred on combinatorial designs and graph theory, and often have computational aspects. My recreational interests include genealogical research, hiking, and curling with the Odds & Ends LGBTQ+ Curling League in St. John's. I am a gay man whose preferred personal pronouns are he/him/his.

My involvement with the CMS dates back to my time as a graduate student, for it was during my doctoral studies in the USA that I became a member of the CMS. A few years later I obtained a tenure-track position at Memorial University, thanks in part to a job advertisement that I saw published in the CMS Notes. This role that the CMS played in facilitating my return home to Canada has helped to give the society a special place in my heart. Certainly in those early years I could not have predicted that I would eventually be elected to the presidency of the society. I am honoured to have this opportunity to serve and to represent the Canadian mathematical community over the next several years.

The CMS has a rich history. This summer we celebrated with a 75th+1 Anniversary Meeting that was hosted online and had over 1,000 registrants. Beyond organising conferences and workshops, the society also has many other activities that engage various audiences. As but a few examples, we have our own scholarly journals as well as publications geared more towards grade-school students, we conduct annual mathematics competitions, we sponsor teams to represent Canada at events such as the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad and the International Mathematical Olympiad, and we provide support for numerous math camps throughout the country.

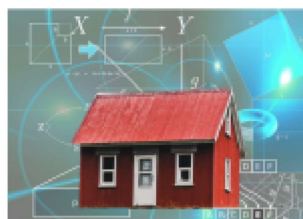
As incoming president, a primary concern for me is ensuring that the CMS continues to thrive so that it can keep promoting mathematics. In short, I want to make sure that we are positioned to carry forward long into the future, well beyond my own time at the helm. In my mind the most critical requirement to ensuring the society's future is to ensure its financial well-being.

A quick look at the society's financial records from the past few years shows that we are paying more than \$50,000 annually in occupancy costs. We have been renting our premises in Ottawa, and like any tenant this means that we have not acquired any equity in our home. In the past year the society decided to change this situation, and we are now looking to purchase a suitable building in Ottawa. Having our own "House of Mathematics" is a step towards establishing an improved long-term financial position, for not only will we come to own a substantial asset (which itself is likely to appreciate in value over time), but once it is paid for then the money that would otherwise have been spent on a mortgage or rent can instead be used to support other aspects of the society's mission. Stay tuned for more news on this matter in the coming months.

Meanwhile, let me also mention some of the components to the annual revenue of the CMS. We have published the Canadian Journal of Mathematics since 1949, the Canadian Mathematical Bulletin since 1958, and soon we hope to also publish a "Transactions" journal. For many years the subscriptions to our journals have generated a significant portion of our total income. How to maintain (or grow) this revenue stream amid a global environment that is shifting towards open access publishing is a conundrum that I am sure to learn much about in the coming months and years. Within days of my confirmation as President-Elect I was put onto both the Publications Committee and the Finance Committee of the CMS, each of which should help to educate me.

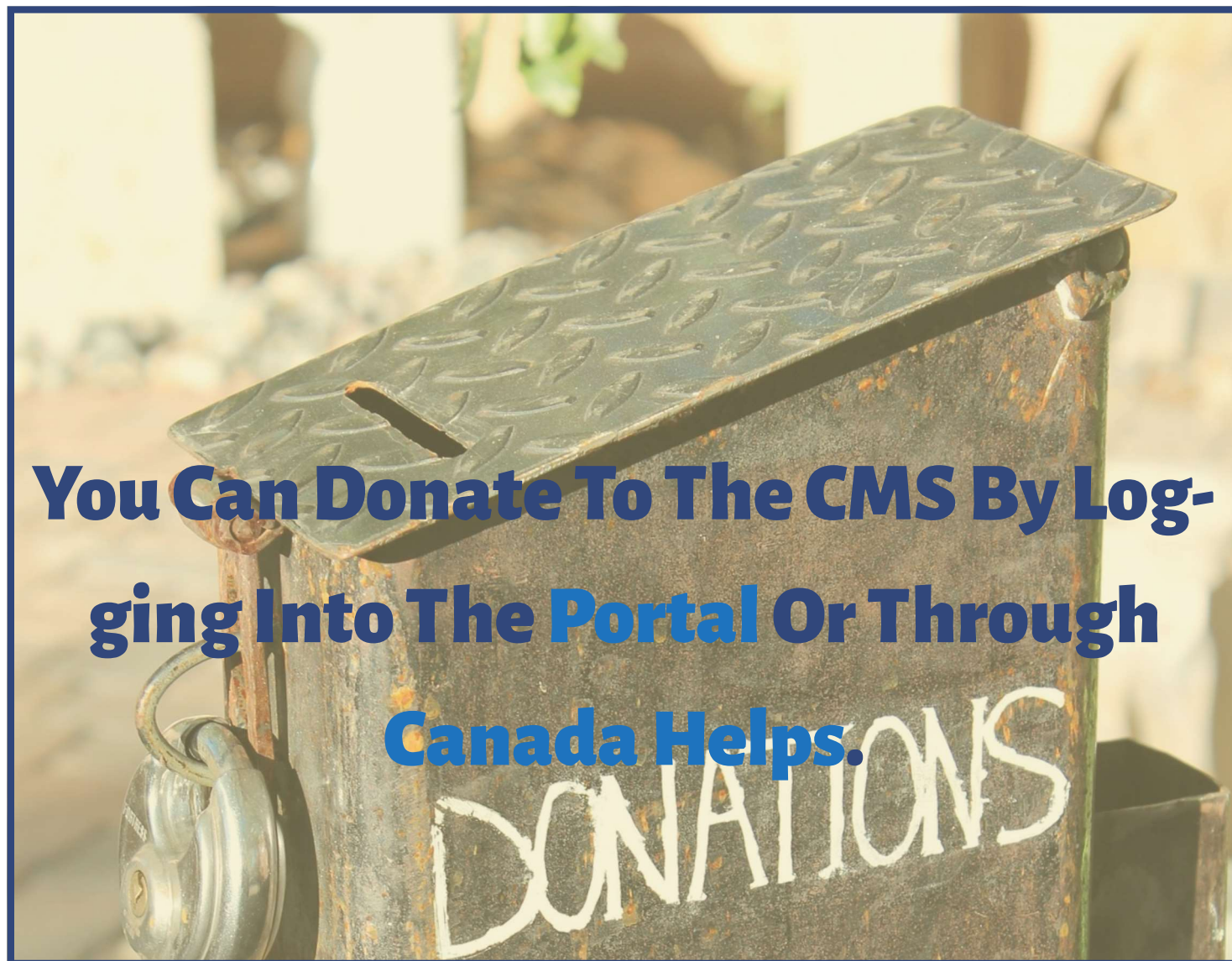
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Although I am fresh and a bit naïve in my new position, I reckon that fundraising is something else that I will also be learning about. Indeed, I've already had some society members approach me with advice and suggestions for how we might leverage our status as a registered charity to attract donations above and beyond what we currently receive. In 2016 we took in \$11,624 in tax-receipted donations. While the following years were more fortunate for us (at the end of 2020 our 5-year average was \$43,408), we can and should strive to further increase this aspect of our operations. For potential benefactors we have a variety of activities and initiatives that could attract their interest, including outreach and training activities, awards and prizes, and now also the expenses of buying a building and transforming it into our new home and headquarters. I invite anybody who has ideas on matters of fundraising to reach out and share their thoughts.

To offer a few closing words now, while I admit that I find it a bit scary to be taking on this new leadership role, I am approaching it and the coming years with excitement. The CMS operates as a large team and I am looking forward to working together with the staff and many volunteers who contribute to the successful operation and vibrancy of our society.



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