

The Canadian Rheumatology Association's 2011 Committee Reports

From the Canadian Rheumatology Association's Executive Board meeting, April 29th to May 1st, held in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Report from the CRA President

By James Henderson, MD, FRCPC

On the weekend of April 29th to May 1st, the Executive Board of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) gathered in Fredericton for their annual executive retreat. The most important date on the calendar for the board, it is an opportunity for new members to meet existing members, and to get their head around the full spectrum of CRA activities.

We camped out at the Crowne Plaza in downtown Fredericton with the St. John River lapping at its shores at near-flood levels. Luckily, the river was nowhere near the record levels we have seen in recent years.

This year, we added a new twist where, on the Friday, the full board and committee chairs participated in a facilitated review of the board structure and function. It is an exercise we had not performed in several years and was long overdue, given the increasing complexity and breadth of board responsibilities in the past few years. We examined committee structure, policies and procedures, decision making, and general effectiveness of the organization. The purpose was to develop an aligned vision and strategic direction for our organization; we also looked at internal and external impacts on the CRA. As we completed the exercise, we determined what was working and what needed improvement. The conclusion of the facilitator was that we are a mature organization that functions well, with a talented and committed group on the board, with a few adjustments to be implemented going forward.

The next day and a half was spent going over the full spectrum of our board activities. Brainstorming sessions were held on topics including education directions, therapeutics, access to care, the website, human resources, the annual general meeting, management, Allied Health Professionals Association issues, and the Canadian Initiative for Outcomes in Rheumatology Care (CIORA,

now a CRA responsibility). After each session there were reports to the full board on priorities that were identified in each session, which will be reported to members by each committee chair subsequently in this issue.

At the end of two and a half days of intense discussion, a tired group left town to head home. My sense was that all participants felt we had a productive weekend that will steer the CRA confidently into the future.

I want to thank all participants for their energy, candor and enthusiasm. The CRA will be a better organization for their involvement.

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After a long day in meetings, Board members sample some Maritime flavours to end the day.