

**Annual General Meeting**  
**of**  
**The Orienteering Association of BC**  
**Dec. 17, 2018**

**President's Report**

The Association had another busy year in 2018. Our provincial clubs do the heavy lifting, of course, and it is the energy and enthusiasm of their members that enables each of them to continue delivering high quality orienteering events and training, from the Pacific to the Rockies. While there were no new clubs launched this year in BC, there has been expansion of club activities to neighbouring regions, such as Salmon Arm and Kelowna. There is also growing interest in the Comox area. At the association level, considerable effort went into participating in the triennial program evaluation from *viaSport*, the provincial body that has been provided OBC with stable funding for the last several years. We expect to hear about the results of that evaluation process by the end of this week. OBC has continued to fund production of major new or revised maps in the province, and to support training workshops for certification of orienteering officials.

While each of the BC clubs has its unique strengths and challenges, there are some common themes, as you will see from the individual club reports. The provincial membership has been slowly but steadily increasing for the last few years, but each club tends to have its ups and downs, depending on where it has focused its resources in a given year. GVOC, for example, devoted considerable effort to helping deliver both a very successful *Canadian O Championships* in the Yukon, and a memorable *Western Canadian O Championships* in the Lower Mainland. Their inability to also mount the usual schedule of local events had a negative impact on their ability to recruit new members in 2018, resulting in a drop in overall membership. On the other hand, the pattern of membership renewals remained strong.

This pattern highlights an on-going challenge for our sport – if we are to grow (or not shrink!), we must constantly recruit new participants, while at the same time ensuring that our core of committed members continues to be well served. These two important goals require, I think, quite different strategies.

Successful recruitment has to consider issues such as improved name recognition, targeting of promising demographic groups, and 'deconstructing' our sport in terms that allow us to highlight the aspects that offer the broadest appeal. In essence, this is a marketing challenge, and it is essential that appropriate planning and resources be brought to bear in solving it, both at the club and provincial level.

Providing the kind of programming that will keep those newly recruited members engaged and dedicated is **not** a marketing exercise – it is a commitment to organizational excellence and development of community. If you love orienteering (as we all do!) you want to be out there as often as possible, on good courses and good maps. You want opportunities to improve your technique, your physical capacity and your mental preparation – successful orienteering is, above all, a head game! At the same time, we need to be efficient and strategic in delivering programs that can support these desires. The pool of experienced and certified volunteers will always be limited, and must be constantly renewed - volunteer burn-out is a very real phenomenon. We are making great progress in

strengthening the certification qualifications of our members, working with the various club executives. More qualified officials means more well-organized events at all levels in BC, and a better spread of volunteer effort across the provincial membership. Volunteering together is not only the life-blood of our sport, it is also the most effective way to build community within our clubs, and within OBC. It is ultimately what will help ensure that all those new members we recruit will remain enthusiastic for years to come.

Brian Ellis, President