



CCI NATIONAL LEADERS FORUM & CONFERENCE - A NEWBIE'S PERSPECTIVE

The National Leaders Forum (NLF) started at noon on Wed May 31st and ran until the end of the day Friday June 2nd. The National Conference was held on Saturday June 3rd. This article provides two accounts of the NLF & Conference from the perspective of two newbies (first time attending a NLF).

The target audience for the National Leaders' Forum (NLF) is the National Executive, the various chapters' directors and chapters' administrators. The NLF is an opportunity for the leadership to share their experiences, challenges and success stories with others. Members at large for the various chapters are eligible to attend as well. On the other hand, the target audience for the National Conference is much broader. All condominium stakeholders are welcome. The Conference is an effective forum for subject matter experts to share their knowledge with the broader audience and for attendees in general to connect and network.

Both the NLF and the Conference enable all attendees to work on the four quadrants of their knowledge matrix. Attendees come to learn specific things based on their awareness (known unknowns) and fill in their knowledge gaps. In the process they are exposed to new topics and ideas that they hadn't even thought about (unknown unknowns) and become aware. While in attendance they realize that they relied on misinformation or disinformation (unknown knowns) which lead to bias in their decision making and judgment.

The NLF started on Wednesday May 31st at noon for CCI National's Executive Committee and for the National Council (composed of a representative from each Chapter). Most other NLF attendees arrived later that day and joined in a 'Meet & Greet' that night, which is an effective networking event. Thursday and Friday were full days with evening social & networking events and open to all CCI Chapters and their members. The final day, Saturday June 3rd was the conference and trade show, which was open to members and non-members alike.

For reference, the detailed program and speaker biographies for the NLF can be found at <https://cci.ca/events/2023-spring-leaders-forum/program/leaders-forum-program> while the information for the Conference can be found at <https://cci.ca/events/2023-spring-leaders-forum/program/saskatoon-conference-program>.

PERSPECTIVE #1 - PATRICIA SALAM

This year the Canadian Condominium Institute held its annual conference in Saskatoon. I don't know if it's because I am from the west, but I felt that it was a great idea to hold this event in a smaller city. Saskatoon was a great host. Attendees stayed at the Alt hotel right across from the new art gallery, The Remai Modern. The location in the heart of their downtown, allowed us to be able to walk and explore the city easily. There were restaurants on both sides of the street for about three blocks from where we stayed. People were out dining, walking in the riverfront and the park. This all gave the impression that it was a lively downtown.

The conference started on Wednesday and ended on Saturday, providing attendees with four wonderful days of connecting and learning. We met colleagues from across the country which was a time to share ideas. The education sessions ranged from reserve funds (the most popular topic for condo corporations) to team building and recycling programs to name a few. We were also able to connect with many business partners to get ideas that ranged from insurance to roofing.

The biggest take away was how beneficial the resource of CCI is to condo owners, condo boards and property managers. I would not hesitate to attend the conference again or to recommend it to fellow board members.

Can't wait until the next in-person NLF & Conference which is scheduled for Halifax in 2024!!!!

PATRICIA SALAAM
DIRECTOR, CCI MANITOBA

PERSPECTIVE #2 - ALAN FORBES

This was my first time attending a CCI NLF & Conference. However, I had previously participated in the three virtual conferences during the pandemic, and while I did find the virtual events useful, there was limited opportunity to ask questions during the various sessions.

Knowledge
(known knowns)

Aware
(known unknowns)

Bias
(unknown knowns)

Ignorance
(unknown unknowns)

The lack of networking opportunities at the virtual conferences was very apparent and degraded the overall experience.

Venue - ALT Hotel

The NLF and Conference was held at the ALT Hotel in downtown Saskatoon, along the bank of the South Saskatchewan River. Their City has done an excellent job of taking advantage of the river bank by putting in walkways, parks, pedestrian bridges and lookouts. Think of The Forks but without the frequently flooded river pathway and the pathway extended well into the Wolseley area. The hotel rooms were modern, clean and had beautiful views out the window. The catering service, with breakfasts & lunches with refreshments and snacks available during the breaks, was very very good for the most part, with the exception of the 'bacon incident' on Thursday morning. Overall the venue and location left a very positive impression.

Networking

There was a famous quote about learning that I think of when attending events like this one. It wasn't until I started writing this article that I learned whom the quote was attributed to.

"Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school."
~ Albert Einstein

Networking to me is a means to learn about everything that is not covered in the formal program for the event. It is what happens in conversations in the hallways, in discussions over a meal or at the refreshment table on a break. Not only does it provide an opportunity to build and maintain relationships across the country, you learn about the people, their lives, why they volunteer with CCI and what they are passionate about.

Program Highlights



CCI Manitoba attendees at the NLF & Conference in Saskatoon (L-R): Alan Forbes, Aesia Desrosiers, John Popowich, Patricia Salaam, Seth Henoeh, Doug Forbes

Most of the sessions were good so I will quickly highlight the sessions that were very good. First up were two sessions on Thursday with Lyndon J Linklater, who introduced us to Indigenous protocol and did the land acknowledgement to open the morning session after breakfast. After lunch he returned to provide the keynote address. He introduced us to the reconciliation topic, what it is all about, why it is required and how we all should proceed. He is an excellent speaker and an engaging storyteller, and gave us an insight into the topic by relating his own family and nation's experience and history. These two sessions impacted my Aware and Bias knowledge quadrants.

Also after lunch was a session on confronting harassment (Devon Cassidy & Jennifer Dickenson), the importance of which was highlighted by the murders of condo directors and family members last December in Vaughan Ontario. Various tools for condo corporations were discussed such as pre-scripted responses to complaints (acknowledge complaint, empathize impact, set expectations for action, etc), the need for human resource policies (respectful workplace, response to harassment or violence, control of communication channels). The most important point though is to provide a consistent and clear message each and every time that unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated - don't just suck it up and hope the problem goes away. This session impacted my Aware knowledge quadrant.

On Friday, the best session was the one by Walter Wakula titled "Responsible Financial Reporting to the Board". Sounds a bit geeky, but what can I say - I'm a Treasurer for two non-profit organizations. The presentation was informative and interesting. The key thing for me was the need to worry about an additional item related to the reserve fund. Until now, I had been worrying about not having enough money in the reserve fund. Now I have to worry about how much is there because I have to be aware of the credit rating of the financial institution in which the funds are held and what portion is insured. This session impacted my Ignorance knowledge quadrant.

On Saturday, the most impressive session was the one on hoarding in condos by Daniel Katzman. He presented a case study that he has been working on for years for a client. It included the trials and tribulations to solve the problem, working with social workers, the police, property managers, the fire department and others. It was depressing as well, as no matter what was done, the problem unit owner, who is very wealthy, merely pays the fines and cleanup costs then resumes hoarding. The presentation dispelled some of my preconceived notions of mental illness and hoarding (Bias quadrant), filled in my knowledge gaps by providing a good overview of the process to follow (Aware quadrant) and exposed me to the full scope, breadth and depth of a problem like this (Ignorance quadrant).

In conclusion, my attendance at the NLF and Conference was well worth the price of admission. I learned a lot, got to meet many colleagues in person after previously seeing them numerous times during the pandemic in Zoom sessions, learned about Indigenous culture and history, and am now aware that Saskatoon is a great place to visit.

ALAN FORBES
DIRECTOR, CCI MANITOBA 🍀

CCI NATIONAL COUNCIL – LEADING THE WAY

There are seventeen Canadian Condominium Institute chapters across the country and each has a representative on the National Council. The Council meets virtually twice per year and in person at the National Leaders' Forum.

At this year's National Leaders' Forum held in Saskatoon May 31-June 3, the Council met twice, once with the National Executive and once on their own. Both meetings were breakfast meetings beginning at 8AM. The meetings are an opportunity to express ideas, gather information from other chapters and to find out what the Executive has accomplished.

The first meeting was with the National Executive. As there are new members to the Council, everyone gave a brief introduction and a quick summary of their chapter's accomplishments and wish list. Here in Manitoba we are developing a marketing plan, formed a Management Advisory Committee and have set a target of 18 new members for the coming year. The Huronia Chapter increased their membership through special promotions from 114 to 187. I briefly chatted with their President and Membership Chair and have given their contact information to our membership committee to discuss what Huronia did and how we can benefit from their actions.

Common issues throughout the chapters include trying to increase membership, increasing attendance at Lunch & Learns, and how to get the message out regarding Education and Advocacy. The Council is working on all these matters to get a satisfactory resolution. Our own committees are working to achieve these goals.

The Executive established a new finance sub-committee and will have numbers for us in the near future. Of concern for Council is the budget process, revenue projections and obviously costs. There was a lot of discussion on the budget process and how affiliation fees are distributed among the chapters. Three of the Council members will be submitting their suggestions on the funding model.

The National Council is looking at the development of chapter websites for standardization and policy and procedures. There will be more coming down the pike from these discussions.

Day two began with a breakfast meeting for National Council members only. With all seventeen representatives present, there was plenty of discussion and feedback. The need for national committee member volunteers was expressed and it may not be surprising but there was no problem in getting volunteers. A committee was established for Website Standardization, Chapter Chatter, National Policy and Procedure Manual, Funding Model and Business Networking Groups. Each of these committees will establish terms of reference and report back to the Council at the next meeting in July.

So why are these Council meetings beneficial? Well, aside from the networking that comes along with any conference or meeting of this type, there is the one on one time with the other representatives. I had numerous conversations with the other Council members privately to exchange ideas and find out what they do differently or better than we in Manitoba do. With any of the ideas exchanged, I was able to get contact information for our committees to discuss the ideas and possibly improve or implement some of the programs. Being able to recognize someone, know who they are and what they are all about is beneficial and something you don't necessarily get from virtual meetings. I'm a big fan of in person meetings and events.

I know all of the Council now, something I couldn't feel confident in saying during the pandemic and I do not need to hesitate should I need to reach out for advice or to bounce an idea.

Next year's Leaders' Forum will be in Halifax and again the Council will conduct their two meetings during the forum. I believe it is beneficial to all chapters.

JOHN POPOWICH, NATIONAL COUNCIL REP
CCI MANITOBA CHAPTER 🍀