

March 2021

Dear Fellow CPA Members,

In many ways, it seems like a very long time ago that I wrote to you last, starting that letter with “... we appear to be only in the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S., with all signs pointing to us all needing to hunker down for some period of time.” Well that ‘period of time’ has been a lot more protracted than I’m guessing any of us had anticipated ... and certainly a lot longer than any of us would have liked. There have been enormous losses of many types over the last 13 months; I only hope that each of you and your loved ones have been spared much of it.

Spring is here, though, and I know that many are hoping for an accelerating return to normal as the weather improves. It is still too early to tell just how Covid-19 will impact our season at CPA this year: as with many aspects of the reopening, a lot will depend on success of the vaccination campaign and the tamping down of any future emergence of more virulent variants. But we’re hopeful that summer will feel a lot more like the Green’s we all remember before 2020. As was the case last year, we will carefully monitor the situation and do our best to ensure our policies reflect broader ones at the town and state level. There will be more information on that to come over the next eight weeks; we remain confident that our membership will adjust accordingly and respectfully, as it has in the past.

Our association is in very good shape. Last year we modernized our communications with the launch of a website and switch to email as a mode for episodic messages, allowing us to stay in touch a bit more frequently even as we needed to distance physically. We updated our By-Laws and managed to productively navigate some issues related to association governance which might have otherwise proven divisive. In December, we were pleasantly surprised by a generous donation by David Cain via the establishment of the Anny B. Cain Memorial Fund, a fitting reflection of the deep connection Anny had with Green’s which will help ensure the physical plant stays in good shape. And over the off-season, we replaced the pavilion roof and did some much-needed general repair, re-roofing and stabilizing of the lifeguard shed.

We are solid financially and have taken the decision to leave dues at their current level for this year. It has been quite a while since we last adjusted our annual dues and we anticipate needing to consider such a move in the coming years as costs continue to creep up while our membership numbers stay stable. Our Treasurer, Jeff Westcott, has undertaken a cash flow analysis which, combined with the ongoing development of our long-term capital plan, will help inform that decision. Contributions to the Marion Prehn Emergency Reserve Fund continue to be generous; thank you to all who give a little extra each year to this “just in case” financial backstop.

Our membership numbers also stay very strong, with very few departures and a perennially full waiting list. Of course, we also recognize that the limited movement from the waitlist can be frustrating, especially for the children of members who have been waiting patiently. As you may recall, we had a plan last year to use member numbers and sign-in sheets to gather data on actual beach usage. That in turn was meant to inform development of some solutions to ensure we have a mechanism for admitting younger members on a more continuous basis. Alas, the pandemic scuttled any normalcy last summer, so it made no sense to use the season as baseline information.

We remain committed to the medium-term goal of easing the membership pressure and would still like to collect some data on actual beach usage. The plan right now is to rekindle the sign-in sheet idea but without the (admittedly unnecessarily confusing) use of member numbers. Starting July 1, there will be a sign-in sheet on the pavilion and we ask that all Green's members and guests sign in when they first arrive at the beach each day. We will be asking lifeguards to remind people to sign in but will by and large be relying on everyone to adhere to this and hope it will quickly become second nature. Rest assured that this is only an information collection tool and not an in-the-moment protocol to decide if someone can use the facilities. Please use the beach as you always have; this is the only way we will get good data to inform the membership decisions. Of course, there is a chance that we are stuck with another abnormal summer so this plan may change. Please keep an eye out for further notices on that subject and feel free to check the website for updates.

On the subject of membership, we sadly lost at least several people with a deep Green's history since I last wrote. Beechie Kampmann, David Laurie, and Helna Babcock (a former member who still had deep ties through her daughters and grandkids) all passed away in the past year. If you are aware of others who I may not have heard about, please bring them to my attention as I have heard from many members that they appreciate hearing the news, albeit sad.

Now, to look forward. After a bummer of a summer last year, we've got our fingers crossed that the summer of 2021 will allow us to assemble more freely and confidently. I personally would love to find a way to rebound from the pandemic in a way that brings an even deeper sense of community to CPA across family, friend and age group lines. We had some fantastic ideas offered last year by people contributing to the planning for the Annual Picnic (inter-generational stone-skipping tournament, anyone?!), which as you know we unfortunately had to cancel. Let's find a way to execute on some of them this year; if you would like to volunteer to help in the efforts to build our community, please let me know.

We anticipate that – like always – trespassing will be a challenge, particularly at the beginning of the season and at the height of the summer. The sign-in sheet should help with some of that but we will monitor the situation and take other, more active steps as needed. I recognize that a norm has developed over time – sometimes with the Board's encouragement – for members to politely inquire whether some apparent newcomers are members. At points, this inquiry has been none-too-polite and/or rubbed infrequent (though legitimate) users the wrong way ... so I would like to ask that we tone it down on this front. If you see someone who you suspect may

not be part of the community during regular hours, please find a lifeguard or board member to ensure that person has indeed signed in. And of course if you see egregious trespassing after-hours, please alert a board member ASAP. Particularly problematic are the curious boaters or large groups of teenagers who seem to have a sixth sense for the precise moment when our security detail goes off-duty.

Finally, I do want to encourage everyone to bookmark the CPA website. As a reminder, the address is www.cottrellpier.com and you can access the members-only portion of the site with the password "greenspier". Last year we had some pretty skeletal content on there but we are working to build out various portions of the site. Notably, Kim Westcott has been hard at work starting to build a history of the association which should be online shortly. It is intended to be the beginning of an 'open source' project (think Wikipedia) to use our collective memories and family lore to tell the story of how Green's came to be where we are today. This is a perpetually open call for any historical tidbits or photos which we can add to the content on the site. Relatedly, a reminder that we will be sending membership communications from cottrellpier@gmail.com so please make sure you have your spam filters set to accept emails from that address ... and of course always feel free to email any questions, concerns or ideas.

So, on to the 2021 season. The annual beach clean-up will be on Saturday, June 5 at 9:00 a.m. Pier commissioning is scheduled for the same day and time. Lifeguards will be on duty starting one week later on Saturday, June 12. The Annual Meeting will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 14 and the Annual Picnic will begin at 5:00 p.m. on the same day.

Please feel free to contact me or any other board member with any questions or concerns. As I wrote in last year's sign-off: we remain committed to making this an association for the membership ... and most of all, enjoyable for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff". The signature is stylized with a cursive 'G' and a horizontal line underneath the name.

Geoff Tuff
President, Cottrell Pier Association