

## President's Message - End of Year Edition

When looking back at our activities since the AGM, one word comes to mind: **CHANGE**. Our committee structure is now fully operational: we have seven active committees, all going full steam ahead. The following is an overview of some of our initiatives since the AGM and a look at what's in store for 2016.



**OFA President  
Lucie Hamelin**

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## Membership

**New this year:** As discussed at the AGM, we implemented a new membership registration system, better aligned with the CFF. Membership categories have remained unchanged, however we have raised the recreational fees to \$35 in order to be fully compliant with CFF. Like other provinces, all of our recreational members are now CFF as well as OFA members, with registrations through the CFF.



I would like to thank all the clubs for supporting this major change on short notice. I know that some have even decreased their own membership fees in order to accommodate the raise in recreational membership fees during this transition year.

However, in reviewing the membership list, I would like to bring to clubs' attention that many of your recreationals are not registering. I know that many of you are instructing recreationals to go to the website and register, but I urge you to please follow-up with your members. It is important that all recreationals be registered for many reasons:

1. If clubs are counting on OFA insurance, please note that your athletes are not covered unless they are registered. You are therefore exposing yourself to some risk.
2. Membership numbers are extremely important for us as an association: we rely on them in our communications with the Ministry, for grant applications, etc. It is important for us that our numbers be as accurate as possible, for all categories of membership.
3. This is an important source of revenue to fund our programs.

We don't have the resources to go from club to club and conduct audits to make sure that all fencers are registered members, but we are counting on you, our clubs, to ensure that their members comply. So, please be good corporate citizens: Register your members! [See details on membership HERE>>](#)

**New this year:** Club registration system: Clubs can now register and pay online their annual membership fees using our new website! This has greatly increased operational efficiency: no more invoices and cheques. Going forward, you will receive a reminder two weeks before membership fees are due. Unless, you say otherwise, fees will be automatically paid through PayPal. The new system also greatly eases our communications with clubs: clubs were required to complete a club profile, including email address and contact information. All OFA communications to clubs will now be sent to the email of the contact person designated by the club in their system profile. Please ensure that the information is always up to date. I am happy to say that as of December 15, all of our clubs had registered and paid their membership fees.

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### **Quest for Gold and High Performance Development Program (HPDP)**

The **Quest for Gold Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP)** is a Provincial initiative funded by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS), and operated through the Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Division. It is designed to support Ontario's amateur high performance athletes.



**New this year:** At the AGM, the OFA High Performance-Quest Committee presented a draft plan for implementation over two years. When fully operational, the program would consist of the traditional **Quest for Gold** program, with some operational modifications, a **High Performance Development Program (HPDP)** and a **Training Enhancement Fund**. The three elements work together in a coherent whole designed to help Ontario athletes develop and perform.



This year we have successfully implemented the first phase of the program. In order to be eligible for Quest funding, athletes had to register in the HPDP program. I am happy to say that 21 fencers registered. They participated in an intensive all-weapons camp from December 11-13. Among other things, the camp covered annual planning, including nutrition planning, a mental performance tool, strength and conditioning gap analyses and how to prepare an annual plan.

Paul Apsimon (OFA HP-Quest Committee Chair), met with each athlete during the camp and clearly went through the planning process. ***Training plans are due December 31!***

Our recent conversations with our Ministry representatives responsible for Quest for Gold has shed light on how the Ministry views and administers the program. For example, the province does monitor results of our Quest athletes. In the past, we have had not so isolated instances of athletes who qualify for Quest for Gold funding, but take the following year off for a number of reasons. This is not acceptable in the eyes of the Ministry. They want to see continued athlete development, commitment and results. Their advice is to evaluate our selections carefully.

More information on the Quest for Gold program, provincial requirements, the HPDP, as well as our selection criteria and deadlines, [are posted on the website HERE>>](#).

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## **New Web Site!**

**New this year:** [Our new website](#) is now live! The information has been rearranged according to our committee/program structure. The site is much more flexible: we can now post pictures, videos; we can use banners to promote certain programs, etc. There is an important component that clubs can use for to promote their own activities: we will send a tutorial on how to use this element of the website system sometime in 2016. ***And we came in under budget!***

The site has been well received. Here is a comment from one of our members:

*"I cannot tell you how much this process alleviates the administrative hassles I have had in the past with collecting rec fees and sending in club membership lists!! I am also looking forward to placing a club website on the OFA website in the not too distant future which would be another fantastic idea in bringing all of the clubs under the OFA (PSO or provincial sport organization) umbrella." - Henk Pardoel, Kingston Fencing Club*



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QUEST



Veterans



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Membership



Coaching



Competitions



Clubs

*The Ontario Fencing Association is the Provincial governing body for fencing and is mandated by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, to represent all aspects of the Sport of Fencing in Ontario.*



2015 World Veterans Fencing Championships

December 02, 2015 | Posted on Veterans Fencing

My Account

Sign Out

DEC 22-23

Duel Nature Winter Break Camp

## New Policies and Compliance

**New this year:** As we reported at the AGM, we are currently reviewing and updating all our policies. So far, we have implemented a new [Event Sanctioning Policy](#), process and form. You will find all the details on our website under [Competitions](#). Please review it carefully when submitting tournament and event requests.



We are continuing to review and update our policies. Currently, we are working on the following:

- New policy, procedure and form governing expenses and reimbursements (planned release – early January)
- Updated Code of Conduct and Disciplinary procedure (planned release – early January)
- New Conflict of Interest policy, particularly governing board and committee members and chairs (planned release – February)
- OFA Bylaws (working draft in time for a board retreat in April; draft for member feedback by May and final ratification at the 2016 AGM).
- We continue to tighten and streamline our administrative and operational processes.

Please keep an eye on the Website for new policies as they are released!

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## Game ON!

**Change** is also very much present in the larger sports community. Building on the energy of the very successful Pan Am and Parapan Am Games hosted in Ontario this past summer and their legacy of renewed appreciation for amateur sport, the Ministry has created an athlete-centered sport plan with three priority areas: **Participation, Development and Excellence**. Please click on the following link for more information for [Game ON: The Ontario Government Sports Plan](#). Our Executive Director, Laurence Bishop, is in close contact with Ministry representatives and we are aligning our programs and policies with the Ministry priorities.



**Game ON –**  
The Ontario Government's Sport Plan  
A LEGACY OF THE PAN AM/PARAPAN AM GAMES



We have submitted one grant application so far and are looking at two other very exciting opportunities due in January. Fingers crossed everyone!

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## What's in store for 2016?

### **Provincial Championships & Gala - March 5-6 @ Royal Military College in Kingston**

Laurence has been quietly working on the event for several months. Date, time and place have been set and hosting contracts have been signed. He has been in touch with [Tourism Kingston](#) and has obtained some sponsorship support. [SportsXpress](#), a community sport publication, active in 16 markets in Ontario, has been signed as our media partner. Our event will be advertised in the January/February issue and will be the feature of their March/April issue, where we will have the cover and an 8 page insert dedicated to the sport of fencing! This is great advertising not just for our event, but for all Ontario clubs and for our sport in general. [TVCogeco](#) will also be broadcasting some events both live and VOD.



We will be holding our annual Gala again this year, where we will be honouring our Quest for Gold recipients, among others. I am very very excited about our potential guest speaker this year! I have been sworn to secrecy until all the arrangements have been concluded, but I can guarantee that this will be quite a treat for fences and non-fencers alike! I am very bad at keeping secrets so I certainly hope that we can make the final arrangements soon so we can announce it!

Keep an eye on the [Provincials](#) page for all the details, including schedule, registration, hotel room block, etc.

### **Ontario Summer Games 2016 - August 11-14 in Mississauga**

2016 is an Ontario Summer Games (OSG) year. We have struck an Ad Hoc committee composed of representatives from the Competitions, HP-Quest and Youth Development Committee. Format will be very much like the last Games: we are focusing on Cadet and U14 categories. We are planning to make this a stellar event for your young fencers. For example, pursuant to our memorandum of agreement, we will have access, and will be using, the Pan Am Legacy Equipment. The Committee has decided to give the event a developmental focus, with more regional opportunities for fencers. Selection criteria and qualifying events will be posted on the website during the second or third week of January. **Stay tuned!**



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### **Happy Holidays!**

And finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express a very heartfelt thank you to all our committee members and chairs. I know we have been pushing hard, but we have done incredible strides over the last year. The quality of the work coming out of our committees is truly impressive. As an association, we are blessed with a slate of incredibly talented and dedicated volunteers, who not only bring to the table extensive sport-related expertise, but also some impressive professional experience (for example, one of our committees is composed of a military base commander, a PhD Student who is increasingly involved in international refereeing, a coach/ref based three time zones away, a semi-retiree who ran the fencing event at Pan Ams for most of the year, a rocket scientist (how cool is this!) and a senior manager for our local electrical utility. We also have several lawyers, university professors and researchers, HR specialists, financial analysts, auditors, and the list goes on! In



addition to their busy day jobs, our volunteers are also coaches, referees, club owners, parents and fencers. Again, thank you for generously giving of your time to help promote fencing in Ontario.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to Laurence Bishop, our Executive Director. Laurence has brought an unprecedented level of expertise, professionalism and commitment to our association. His extensive knowledge of the sports industry in general and impressive list of contacts have been invaluable and is raising the profile of the sport of fencing in this province. Although Laurence was hired as a part-time executive director (15 hours/week), he has been working 45 hour weeks (which almost makes him a volunteer!), thereby donating a huge portion of his time to our association. His dedication, commitment and “stick-with-it-ness” has allowed us to create and implement programs, policies and processes that are definitely allowing us to move our sport to a higher level. Again and again, thank you Laurence!

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## **OFA OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE**



Please note that our OFA offices will be closed from 5 pm Friday December 18 until 9am Monday January 4. During this time, Laurence will be enjoying a well-deserved vacation. Although the Board has asked him not to answer emails over the holidays, I know that his customer service ethic will get the better of him. So please be mindful of his time: unless something is urgent (i.e. you need to make an insurance claim, or you want to send him a holiday message, thanking him for his support in 2015), save it until next year!

Our only outstanding issue for 2015 is the Quest for Gold plans due December 31. As discussed earlier, camp participants were given guidance on the planning process and a template that they can use if they wish. Coaches for Quest candidates: please make yourselves available to answer any questions that your athletes may have.

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**On behalf of the Board and our Executive Director, I would like to wish each and every one of you a very Happy Holidays!**



**2015-16 OFA HPDP athletes and coaches**

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**For more information, contact us:**

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