

# **CONSTITUTION BRITISH COLUMBIA FARM WRITERS' ASSOCIATION**

**Constitution Adopted January 29, 2010**

## **Article I - The Legal Stuff**

Name: British Columbia Farm Writers' Association

Definitions: "BCFWA" shall mean British Columbia Farm Writers' Association.

"CFWF" shall mean the Canadian Farm Writers Federation.

"Agriculture" and "farm" may be used interchangeably and shall mean the commercial production of, and services related to the commercial production of food, fibre and ornamental horticulture.

## **Article II - Why We Exist**

1. To assist in the improvement, development and understanding of Canadian agriculture.
2. To encourage responsible and professional farm writing and communications practices.
3. To give our members credibility with, and help our members secure co-operation from, relevant news sources.
4. To advance the status and welfare of our members through:
  - a. Encouraging and promoting the exchange of material which will assist in providing the public with accurate and current agricultural information.
  - b. Providing a network for our members to connect with and learn from each other.
  - c. Encouraging and promoting the exchange of ideas on improved methods of presenting agricultural information.
  - d. Other means our members deem helpful.

## **Article III – What We Do**

1. The BCFWA is a non-profit regional organization affiliated with the CFWF. Where there is a conflict between this constitution and the constitution and bylaws of the CFWF, the CFWF constitution and bylaws shall prevail.
2. The BCFWA serves as the administrator of the J.R. (Tim) Armstrong Memorial Fund –named in honour of one of the founders of both the BCFWA and the CFWF. The fund is a registered charity which distributes an annual scholarship to a university student in the field of agriculture and/or journalism. One or more persons shall be elected at each BCFWA annual general meeting to act as administrators of the Tim Armstrong Fund for the following year.

## **Article IV – Who We Are**

1. Member: Anyone interested in and/or whose work is related to communicating with and about the agricultural community through broadcast, print and electronic media is eligible for membership in the BCFWA, provided their area of operation includes the province of British Columbia. Membership may be denied or a member expelled for any reason by a unanimous resolution of the BCFWA Executive.
2. Life Member: Individuals who have been members of the BCFWA for at least one year during their life and who have made an outstanding contribution to the field of agriculture and/or the BCFWA may be recognized as Life Members. Anyone so qualified may be nominated for life membership at an Annual Meeting of the Association and must be elected by a two-thirds majority of those present at the meeting. Life members hold their position for life. They are exempt from paying any dues but retain all the privileges of active membership.
3. Honorary Member: Honorary Membership recognizes someone who has, is, or is expected to contribute to the well-being of the BCFWA and/or its members but who would not normally be a member of the BCFWA. Honorary Members may be elected for a one-year term at an annual meeting of the BCFWA and may be re-elected indefinitely. Honorary Members need not pay membership dues and will not have voting rights in the association.

## **Article V – Who Our Leaders Are**

The BCFWA operates with a four to six person Executive. Each member of the Executive shall be elected at a duly-held Annual General Meeting by a majority of those present. Anyone so elected shall hold his or her office until the next Annual General Meeting and may be re-elected indefinitely. To hold a position on the executive, a person must be a member in good standing.

The Executive consists of the following:

1. President: The president is responsible for calling and chairing the annual meeting, executive meetings and special general meetings, representing the BCFWA and its members and doing such other duties as the Executive may determine from time to time. If the President resigns or otherwise fails to complete his/her term, the Vice-President will become the interim President until the next Annual General Meeting.
2. Vice-President: The vice-president will assist the president and other members of the executive and perform such other duties as the Executive may determine from time to time. As noted in a., the vice-president will become the interim president if the President fails to complete his/her term. If the vice-president becomes the interim president, or if he/she resigns or fails to complete their term, the Executive may appoint another member in good standing as an interim vice-president or leave the position vacant until the next annual general meeting.
3. Secretary: The secretary of the association will maintain the minutes of all general and executive meetings and perform such other duties as the Executive may determine from time to time. If the secretary resigns or fails to complete their term, the Executive will appoint another member in good standing as an interim secretary until the next annual general meeting.
4. Treasurer: The treasurer is responsible for maintaining the financial records of the association, including obtaining membership dues, maintaining the membership roll of the BCFWA, and remitting dues as required to the CFWF. If the treasurer resigns or fails to complete their term, the Executive will appoint another member in good standing as an interim treasurer until the next annual general meeting.
5. BC CFWF Director(s): One or more persons (the number is determined annually by the CFWF) shall be elected as BC's official director(s) of the CFWF. It is preferable but not necessary that the BC CFWF director be an Officer of the Association. The BC CFWF director(s) will be the BCFWA's representative(s) to the CFWF. The term of the BC CFWF director(s) will begin at the conclusion of the next CFWF annual general meeting and continue to the following CFWF annual general meeting. If the CFWF annual meeting or CFWF Executive elects or appoints other BCFWA members to the CFWF Board of Directors, these persons are not considered members of the BCFWA executive.
6. Newsletter Editor/Webmaster: This is an optional position. At any annual general meeting, BCFWA members may choose to elect a Newsletter Editor and/or Webmaster. To do so, members must first approve a motion calling for such an election before electing someone to the position. If no such motion is made and approved at an annual general meeting, there shall be no Newsletter Editor/Webmaster position until approved at a future Annual General Meeting.

## **Article VI – How We Operate**

1. The Association shall hold one Annual General Meeting each year. The meeting shall be held within the first three months of any calendar year. Notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be provided to members in good standing by letter or electronic means at least 14 days prior to the meeting. The annual general meeting shall elect the Executive of the Association as noted above and conduct such other business as it deems fit.
2. The Association may hold additional Special Meetings during the year as directed by the members at the annual general meeting or as determined by the Executive. Notice of Special Meetings shall be provided to members in good standing by letter or electronic means at least 14 days prior to the meeting. Such meetings may not elect members of the Executive but may conduct any other business it deems fit. Annual and Special Meetings of the Membership must be held in person.

3. The Executive may hold as many meetings as it deems appropriate. Executive meetings may be held in person, by teleconference or other electronic means. Any member of the Executive may call for an executive meeting, such notice to be delivered to all other members of the Executive by letter or electronic means at least seven days prior to the meeting.

4. Quorums: A quorum at an Annual General Meeting or Special Membership Meeting shall be the greater of five members or 15 percent of the members in good standing. A quorum at an Executive meeting shall be 50 percent plus one of the members of the Executive.

5. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer are the officers of the BCFWA and may sign financial instruments and other legal agreements on behalf of the BCFWA. Only one signature is required for financial instruments under \$500. Two signatures are required for financial instruments of \$500 or more. BCFWA officers are authorized to sign individual financial instruments exceeding \$1,000 only if those instruments involve remitting dues to the CFWF or if they involve BC's hosting of a CFWF national conference. All other amounts exceeding \$1,000 must first be approved by those present at a duly-held Annual General Meeting or Special Meeting of the BCFWA.

#### **Article VII - Membership Dues**

The annual membership fee shall be determined by BCFWA members at an Annual General Meeting and be in force until changed at a future AGM. BCFWA dues shall include dues payable to the CFWF. Dues cover a calendar year and are payable at the annual meeting or within 30 days thereafter. Any members who fail to pay their dues within the required period may have their names deleted from the membership roll.

Members are considered to be members in good standing as soon as their dues are paid and are then eligible to vote in Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings. Members who have paid dues in the previous calendar year are considered to be members in good standing until the end of the next annual general meeting. Dues paid in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of one calendar year shall be considered as dues for the following calendar year.

#### **Article VIII - Resolutions and Business**

1. Unless otherwise specified in this constitution, business and/or resolutions may be transacted by the BCFWA with a majority vote of those eligible voting members present at a duly-called meeting. The BCFWA may enact, amend or repeal by-laws under the same conditions. Such by-laws become effective immediately upon adoption. The Secretary shall keep a separate record of all by-laws.

2. The constitution may be amended without notice by the unanimous vote of the members present at any Annual General Meeting. It may also be amended by a three-fourths vote of the members present at such meeting provided that members have been given written or electronic notice of the proposed amendment not less than ten days before the meeting.