



2009-2010 Annual Report

Manitoba Chapter
Society for Technical Communication
Winnipeg, Manitoba
www.stcmanitoba.org

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President's report

Written by Ben Davies, President

2009-2010 was an extremely challenging year for the STC Manitoba executive.

We started in May 2009 without a formal Secretary, Membership Chair, or Program Chair, forcing several executive members to take on additional roles. I became the unofficial President / Program Chair, Andrew Quarry became the unofficial Past President, Secretary, Membership Chair and general laborer, and other executive members filled in wherever help was needed.

Very early in the year I was contacted by STC International regarding their looming deficit as a result of the global recession—they were set to lose more than a million dollars in 2009-2010. To compensate, they asked each chapter to create a zero based budget covering the next 18 months of operation, and then send them a cheque for all surplus money that was leftover.

The situation created a firestorm of controversy across the entire organization. In Canada, the response was extremely negative. Presidents from other Canadian STC chapters started communicating with each other through e-mail about the situation, and over time, a critical mass of Canadians upset with STC International was developed.

We held conference calls and exchanged e-mails about what STC SHOULD be doing to better serve Canadian members, most of which focused on the disparity of membership benefits across different geographical locations. In the end, some of the Canadian STC chapters outright refused to submit any surplus money, because they determined (after speaking with a lawyer) that there was no legal grounds for them to pursue and acquire money from chapters residing outside of the United States of America. STC Manitoba decided to take the middle road—after many tiring meetings over the summer, we settled on only submitting a portion of our surplus, and left enough in the bank to ensure we could continue operating without any help from STC for 12 months beyond the 18 month budget period.

The zero based budget forced us to make some changes, the biggest being that we needed to find a new location for dinner meetings that did not charge a room rental fee. My first thought was Red River College, because they have the Technical Communication Diploma and Certificate programs, and we've held conferences there in the past. Fortunately, I managed to negotiate a deal with Larry Partap, Chair of Creative Communications, which allowed us to use the Red River College Princess St. facilities for monthly executive and dinner meetings at no charge for 2009-2010.

Did I mention all this happened before we even had our first dinner meeting in September? Talk about being thrown in the deep-end before learning how to swim—with no lifeguards on duty and a shark in the pool!

Fortunately for the sanity of our group, things kind of died down a little bit after the summer, and we were able to cruise along for the rest of the year rather comfortably.

The biggest positive to come from the recession experience over the summer was the newly formed STC Canada network. I stayed in contact with other STC Canada Presidents throughout the year, and we started working towards the following initiatives:

- Make membership benefits the same across the entire society regardless of geographical location (American members have more benefits than anyone else in the society).
- Create a Canadian STC salary survey that covers the entire country (not just Alberta).
- Get a Canadian STC member elected to the board of directors (we were too late for nominations this year, but are pushing for it to happen next year).
- Create an STC Canada webpage that serves the needs of Canadian members.
- Create an STC Canada version of Intercom that focuses on Canadian issues, and allows Canadian Colleges and Universities to advertise programs related to our field.

Most of these initiatives are still ongoing, and I hope that the new President of STC Manitoba continues along the path I started and maintains the STC Canada network that is being developed, as it could be the start of something special for Canadian members.

I would like to thank everyone (executive and non-executive) who has helped me this year. I wouldn't have been able to do it without you, and I look forward to working with all of you again in the future!

President's Award

The President's Award honours chapter members who have made a substantial contribution to STC Manitoba over the past year. Initially, I wasn't going to single out anyone for this award, because I sincerely felt everyone on the executive was more than deserving. But after some thought, it seemed one person consistently stood out, and at times, felt like the glue holding us together.

Acting as the official Past President, and unofficial Secretary, Membership Chair and newsletter editor assistant, Andrew Quarry consistently provided leadership and support for me and the rest of our chapter throughout the year. His wealth of experience enabled us to make informed decisions on chapter affairs, and his calming nature helped us deal with the many controversies and issues we faced throughout the year. He was always willing to help, and he even delivered a presentation during the monthly dinner meeting in November!

Thank you for doing so much for our chapter this year Andrew!

Chapter Awards

I decided that since I can't give everyone a President's Award, that I would show my appreciation to those who volunteered their time and efforts over the past year.

The following people earned a chapter award:

Dorothy Davidson

Dorothy was the official Public Relations Chair this year. She did a wonderful job creating posters, and advertising our chapter events. Always smiling, Dorothy had an extremely positive attitude in all situations, and was always willing to help out in areas unrelated to her official position. Thanks for all your hard work Dorothy!

Donald Nordman

Donald was the official Treasurer this year. He did an amazing job creating our zero based budget in the summer, and has been extremely patient yet persistent while working with STC International to submit our surplus cheque. Thanks for all your hard work Donald!

Susan Haire

Susan was the official Vice-President this year. She did a great job creating signs for people attending dinner meetings at Red River College, and also volunteered for presentations in two separate dinner meetings: first she did a presentation on creating portfolios at our January progression, and second she hosted the Science Café with Ron Blicq in March. She also wrote a "Where are they now?" series on past members of STC Manitoba for the newsletter. Thanks for all your hard work Susan!

Rachel Ines

Rachel was the Newsletter Editor and Archivist this year. As per usual, Rachel did an amazing job on the newsletter again this year. While she did not hold a voting position in the executive, she still made a commitment to attend almost every single executive meeting throughout the year, and was always willing to help out. I know her hard work and dedication will be missed. Thanks for everything this year Rachel!

Brad Friesen

Brad was our Webmaster this year. He did a great job keeping the STC Manitoba website updated, and worked with the Manitoba Editors' Association to cross-advertise their events on our site. I would especially like to thank him for going above and beyond, and developing a brand new up-to-date website for STC Manitoba this year. I think it looks awesome! Thanks for all the hard work Brad!

Vice-President's report

Written by Susan Haire, Vice-President

As chapter vice president, I am pleased to have been able to serve the chapter in various ways, as detailed below.

Executive

The chapter executive has worked hard this year, dealing not only with the usual business of the chapter, but also with the restructuring and changes at the Society level. It has been a challenging time and I would like to commend our president, Ben Davies, for leading us through the sometimes-shaky quagmire of economic evolution. With his guidance, we were able to weather the storm and emerge with our budgets and resolve intact.

Leadership

Due to circumstances beyond his control, our president was unable to attend a couple of chapter meetings. As vice president, it was my duty and pleasure to step in and take the helm. It's been a long time since I led a chapter meeting (fifteen years!), but I was delighted to find how easy it was to slip back into familiar territory. As they say, you never forget how to ride a bicycle, or lead a group of interested and interesting meeting attendees.

Special Project - The First Fifteen

For our chapter's twentieth anniversary year, I have had the privilege of tracking down and writing articles for the newsletter about the first fifteen members of STC Manitoba, who gave us chapter status. These articles have appeared throughout the year, and while I was unable to locate or interview some of those pioneers, I did reconnect with a few I'd lost track of over the years. It was a delight to hear how my fellow founding members have grown and expanded their interests and skills since that first exciting year.

I have enjoyed my time on the executive, but other responsibilities call and I am unable to continue. I want to thank my fellow executive members for the privilege of serving with them, and I hope next year's vice president will experience the same support and encouragement as I did.

Past-President's report

Written by Andrew Quarry, Past President

The chapter's Immediate Past President usually takes responsibility for a special project or two and then concludes the year by recruiting a slate of volunteers.

Special Project

The special project turned out to be “taking care of the basics.”

The term started with some significant vacancies on the Executive Committee that were never filled in the normal fashion—Program Chair, Secretary, and Membership Chair. While the President did double duty as Program Chair, the Immediate Past President did double duty as Secretary. More than the usual amount of record keeping was involved because extra meetings of the Executive Committee were called to address issues presented by the financial stress that the [international] STC was under.

Slate

Recruitment of a slate of volunteers did not go well. Only a couple of persons would make commitments to serve in voting positions on the Executive Committee and those were conditional upon somebody stepping forward as nominee for President. As of 2010 April 22, nobody has agreed to serve as President and, hence, none of the voting positions on the slate have been filled.

One non-voting position has been filled on the slate: Sean Lenehen has agreed to serve as webmaster.

Program report

Written by Ben Davies, Program Chair

The following report summarizes the monthly dinner meetings and presentations.

Before the year started—Planning

My first task as unofficial Program Chair for 2009-2010 was to find a new location for our monthly dinner meetings that did not charge a fee for room rental, because we needed to find ways to save money as a result of the zero based budget requirement from STC International.

I decided to contact Red River College to see if they'd be willing to give us a room for free, with the premise that we'd be offering students educational and networking opportunities at our monthly dinner meetings, and we'd be raising awareness of the profession for the Technical Communication Diploma and Certificate programs being offered at the College.

Larry Partap, Chair of Creative Communications at Red River College agreed, and we were provided free rooms at the Princess St. campus for our monthly executive and dinner meetings for 2009-2010.

My second task as unofficial Program Chair was to develop a program for the year. Early on, we decided to downsize the dinner meeting program to once every two months because of our short-staffed executive committee. Now, I'm not exactly sure what happened, but somehow that idea got lost. So rather than sit back and enjoy our summer, the entire executive instead decided to work very hard to gather presentation ideas and find speakers, and by September, were able to mail out a complete dinner meeting schedule for the complete 2009-2010 year.

Finally, I needed to modify the food and beverage offerings at our dinner meetings. Traditionally, our meetings were held at Place Louis Riel, where a three-course meal was served, and members were charged \$20 to attend. This format was not possible at Red River, so I decided to take a different, less-formal approach that would facilitate networking in a more relaxed atmosphere. So in 2009-2010, we served sandwiches, fruit, cheese and crackers, punch and coffee at most meetings, all for a reduced rate of \$10 per member instead of \$20.

Dinner meetings

Unfortunately, attendance at our monthly dinner meetings dropped significantly in 2009-2010. I think the main reasons for the drop include the change in venue from Place Louis Riel to Red River College, the drop in overall membership numbers to just over half of what we had last year, and the day of the week our dinner meetings were being held.

It seems the dinner meeting era of STC Manitoba is starting to fade, and members are looking for something fresh. Next year, we will look at eliminating monthly dinner meetings, and instead, move towards providing more in-depth educational opportunities for members in the form of workshops, seminars and conferences.

September

For the first meeting of the year Forde Oliver delivered a presentation on Digital Multimedia. I was unfortunately unable to attend this meeting, but I heard the presentation was fantastic! Several members expressed interest in learning more on the topic, and Forde has agreed to work with us again in the future.

October

Our second meeting was dedicated to the students taking the Technical Communication Diploma program at Red River College. We served free pizza to students and provided a fun, relaxed networking atmosphere for them to become acquainted with STC Manitoba members.

November

Long-time STC member Andrew Quarry delivered a presentation on starting your own business in the field of technical communication. He described the processes he went through to start his own business, and gave tips on what to do and what to avoid.

December

We had a “Question and Answer” session in December, where I provided members with an update on what was happening with STC International. Members asked questions and expressed opinions in a relaxed, informal atmosphere.

January

January was progression month. Four people delivered 15 minute presentations on the following topics:

- Susan Haire: “Creating Professional Portfolios”
- Brad Friesen: “Using Social Networks: LinkedIn and Twitter”
- Nirdosh Ganske: “Starting a Social Network: Ning”
- Rachel Ines: “Introduction to InDesign”

The meeting was well attended, and members expressed the desire for more progression type events in the future.

February

Long-time STC member Kelly Thibodeau delivered a presentation on writing for the web, where she provided tips for creating effective, usable websites. The meeting was very well attended, and members expressed interest in learning more about creating websites.

March

Ron Blicq and Susan Haire hosted a “Science Café” format meeting at the Prairie Ink Café in McNally Robinson. A Science Café is basically an informal question and answer session, where the speakers (Ron and Susan) would discuss a topic and pose a question for the rest of the group to discuss amongst themselves. I was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting, but heard it was very well received.

April

We were fortunate to get a tour of IMRIS in April. IMRIS is a new, Winnipeg based, medical technology company that specializes in providing high-tech imaging solutions for the medical industry. They are the first medical technology company in the history of Canada to post a profit, and the only company in the world currently capable of moving an MRI into an operating room during surgery. The tour was well attended, and members seemed to really enjoy the change away from the typical monthly dinner meeting.

May

May is the annual general meeting (AGM). Sue Hemphill, Associate Trainer with Resolution Skills Center, and owner of Healthy Hive Consulting delivered a presentation

called "Communication Styles: Unravelling the Mystery", where she talked about how communication styles can affect miscommunication and lead to conflict.

Secretary's report

Written by Ben Davies

As mentioned previously, we did not have a formal Secretary in 2009-2010. At the start of the year Andrew Quarry volunteered to take minutes for several meetings, which eventually shifted him into the position of unofficial Secretary.

We held regular monthly executive meetings from May 2009 to May 2010, except in December when the meeting was cancelled.

Membership's report

Written by Ben Davies

As mentioned previously, we did not have a formal Membership Chair in 2009-2010.

We had a high of 43 members in 2009-2010.

We now have 21 members in the STC Manitoba chapter as of 2010, April 30.

Archivist's report

Written by Rachel Ines, Archivist

I have continued to maintain both hardcopy and electronic copies of chapter activities and publications whenever possible. Throughout the past year, I have been updating the chapter archives with copies of the newsletter, meeting posters, emails regarding chapter activities, and executive committee materials where possible. I will continue to update the archives when possible for the upcoming year. As always, chapter members can view any of our archival materials upon request.

Website Coordinator's report

Written by Ben Davies

In addition to keeping the STC Manitoba website updated every month, we were very fortunate this year to have our Webmaster, Brad Friesen, re-design the STC Manitoba website into a modern, easy-to-use format!

The new site features a job bank, information about upcoming and previous monthly dinner meetings, an archive of STC Manitoba newsletters, general information about our

chapter, and advertising for upcoming Manitoba Editors’ Association events and other professional development opportunities.

To view the new site, visit www.stcmanitoba.org

Thanks Brad for doing an awesome job on our new site!

Newsletter Coordinator report

Written by Rachel Ines, Newsletter coordinator

In my final year as newsletter editor and with the help and support of editorial assistant Andrew Quarry, we were able to produce seven full issues to date. The published content is as follows:

Issue published	Number of pages
September 2009	8
October 2009	10
November 2009	6
December 2009	8
January 2010	8
February 2010	10
March 2010	10
April 2010	8
May 2010	6

The final newsletter issue is scheduled for publication in June. This will be the fourth year in a row that *Manuscript* will be published ten times over the year.

As I look back on my final year as newsletter editor, I have many people to thank for their regular contributions over the past few years. Although most of the time I thought I was running out of ideas for newsletter articles, inspiration seemed to come out of nowhere. I hope that the information provided was beneficial to chapter members. Several chapter members have stepped up to provide our readers with an informative and timely newsletter that helps keep technical communicators in Winnipeg and beyond informed on our chapter activities and technical communicator issues.

Looking back on what newsletter volunteers have accomplished, we continue to successfully maintain a winning formula for *Manuscript*.

Thank you

I'd like to express my gratitude to Andrew Quarry for his assistance with filling in on the writing duties for meetings I was unable to attend and for his great attention to detail when editing articles and finally chapter members and friends of STC for their newsletter contributions. I would also like to thank outgoing President Ben Davies for his regular monthly contributions and keeping us aware of the new direction for STC both locally and internationally; senior members Kevin Longfield for finding something to write based on the STC publications, and Susan Haire for tracking down and writing the members for the "Where are they now?" article series; and Dorothy Davidson for her monthly publicity information.

It is always a challenge to try and stay creative and with help from my regular contributors over the past three years, I would not be able to maintain such great standards for our chapter.

Public Relations report

Written by Dorothy Davidson, Public Relations Chair

This was my second year serving as PR Chair. Basically, the PR Chair's role is to disseminate information about the chapter, both within the club and to the general public. The focus this year was on continuing past advertising strategies while widening the audience for STC activities through outreach to specific groups of related individuals.

Public service announcements

In keeping with the PR Chair mandate, I provided regular public service announcements for the media – the CBC Community Events calendar, CKY's What's Up, Shaw Cable's public announcements, and the Business Calendar of the Winnipeg Free Press. By ensuring that the announcements were submitted at least three weeks in advance of the events, we had better success with this advertising this year. Unfortunately, sometimes it proved impossible to meet the deadlines for this free advertising because event details were still being worked out. This should be a consideration for future years.

Posters

The PR Chair continued to prepare, organize printing for, and distribute posters advertising our monthly meetings. These posters were distributed through the Winnipeg Public Libraries approximately two weeks before each event. Nine meeting posters were prepared at an average cost of \$30.00 per meeting.

A copy of each poster was provided to the STC newsletter editor and website coordinator for further distribution.

Copies were also circulated to eight sister organizations that assist STC by posting copies in their workplaces and disseminating information through their websites and newsletters. These organizations include the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba (APEGM), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the Certified Technicians and Technologists Association of Manitoba (CTTAM) and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. This year, we added two University of Manitoba faculties to this list – the faculties of Computer Science and Engineering.

We also provided a monthly poster for the Technical Communications departments at both the Princess Street and Notre Dame Avenue campuses of Red River College (RRC).

Visitor packages

A new initiative this year was the preparation of visitor packages to be handed out to visitors at monthly meetings. These packages included a welcoming letter from the president, general background information on STC, STC Manitoba chapter information and contact list, a list of professional development activities planned for the year, a copy of the newsletter, and samples of information available through STC publications.

Student meeting/packages

A second initiative undertaken this year was an active campaign to appeal to students enrolled in RRC's Technical Communication diploma program. The STC president provided a short presentation during their student orientation and the PR Chair met with the students in late September to discuss STC Manitoba and its student initiatives.

In preparation for this latter meeting, a student package was compiled and distributed to the students. In addition to the items listed above for the visitor package, this package contained information on STC scholarships and volunteer opportunities available through STC and Manitoba Youth Services, an STC lapel button, and an invitation to our annual "Meet the Students" night.

Student scholarships

Under the auspices of the PR Chair, a student scholarship program was reactivated to recognize academic achievement in RRC's Technical Communication diploma program. Two students, Allison Machovec (first year) and Sarah Brannan (second year) received scholarship awards of \$250.00 each. I would like to thank Kathy Davis and Cheri Frazer for agreeing to act as judges for the scholarship contest.

Also, many, many thanks to Kevin Longfield for all his support in STC activities related to the students of the Technical Communications diploma program.

Brochure

The Chapter brochure received a quick update this year in preparation for its use as part of the visitor and student packages.

Bring-a-guest contest

The Bring-a-guest contest was reactivated and advertised to the membership through a new brochure and advertisements in the newsletter. The winner will receive a free STC membership for 2010-2011.

I would like to thank Andrew Quarry for his patience and assistance in proofreading and printing materials for the various packages.

Budget

The PR Chair submitted an estimated budget for 2009-10 totaling \$2580.00. This amount included the cost of two scholarship awards, an STC membership for the winner of the Bring-a-Guest contest, the extra costs related to a student volunteer, printing, and supplies. At this point, our spending is somewhat under our original estimate. This is primarily because I found an excellent printer at a cheaper price than in the past and we did not hire a student intern.

In conclusion, I would like to offer many thanks to the members of the chapter executive for their support and assistance throughout the year. It has been a challenging year, necessitating hard work and creative thinking, but offering many rewards. I wish everyone an even better year in 2010-2011.

Treasurer report

Written by Donald Nordman, Treasurer

This report covers the STC Manitoba Chapter July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 fiscal year.

The Society for Technical Communication financial crisis has had an impact on the fiscal fortunes of the STC Manitoba Chapter. Transfers from STC to the local Chapters ceased, depriving our Chapter of the money (close to \$1000.00 per year) we had been accustomed to receiving every year. STC requested that Chapters draw up a budget for their approval, and that Chapters send them all funds not required for approved operations. Our Chapter decided to give STC \$1200.00, which was less than demanded. The decline in meeting attendance has also contributed to our fiscal decline.

Table 1: Balances July 1, 2009 (All cheques cashed)

Date	Chequing (\$)	Mutual Fund (\$)	Credit Card (\$)	Petty Cash (\$)
Balance, July 1, 2009	1454.34	5663.47	490.05	15.00

Table 2: Working Balances April 30, 2010 (As if all cheques cashed)

Date	Chequing (\$)	Mutual Fund (\$)	Credit Card (\$)	Petty Cash (\$)
Working, April 30, 2010	951.69	4468.14	372.18	20.00

Table 3: Estimated Working Balances June 30, 2010 (All cheques cashed)

Date	Chequing (\$)	Mutual Fund (\$)	Credit Card (\$)	Petty Cash (\$)
Estimated, June 30, 2010	1347.86	2469.14	372.18	20.00

Table 4: Estimated Changes July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

Date/Surplus	Chequing (\$)	Mutual Fund (\$)	Credit Card (\$)	Petty Cash (\$)
Balance, July 1, 2009	1454.34	5663.47	490.05	15.00
Estimated June 30, 2010	1347.86	2469.14	372.18	20.00
Surplus/(Deficit)	(106.48)	(3194.33)	(117.87)	5.00

**Table 5: Total Estimated Change
July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

Date/Surplus	Total (\$)
Balance, July 1, 2009	7622.86
Estimated June 30, 2010	4209.88
Surplus/(Deficit)	(3413.68)

Table 6: Estimated Total Assets June 30, 2010 (\$)

4209.88

**Table 7: STC Manitoba Budgeted and Actual Revenues and Expenditures
July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

	Budgeted ¹ (\$)	Working Estimate ² (\$)
Revenues		
Monthly Dinner Meetings	1365.00	745.00
AGM	195.00	195.00 ¹
STC Prizes Money		651.00
Interest		5.85
Total Revenues	1560.00	1596.85
Expenditures		
Publicity	580.00	500.56
Prizes and Bring-a-Guest	500.00	334.41
Archives and Newsletter	280.00	304.36
Dinner Meetings	1960.00	812.83
AGM	550.00	550.00 ¹
Website	150.00	117.87
Student Awards	500.00	500.00
Payment to STC		1200.00
STC Prizes Disbursement		668.00
Bank Charges		22.50
Total Expenditures	4520.00	5010.53
Surplus/(Deficit)	(2960.00)	(3413.68)

¹Estimated

²Contains a few estimated numbers for the May 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010 period.

STC Manitoba Chapter Financial Report: 04 May 2010 AGM

Bank Account:

Working Balance 13 April 2010 Report: \$951.69

Income:

Interest (30 April)	<u>0.02</u>	
	0.02	+0.02
		951.71

Expenses:

<i>Ch/Ca</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Amount</i>
471	Dorothy Davidson (Publicity)	40.00
472	Andrew Quarry (Gifts and Prizes)	7.33
473	ARAMARK (Dinner Meetings)	<u>254.36</u> (Not Cashed)
		301.69
		<u>-301.69</u>
		650.02

Working Balance on 30 April 2010 (If all cheques cashed) \$650.02

Actual Bank Balance 30 April 2010 \$2104.38

(2104.38 - 1200.00 [STC] - 254.36 [ARAMARK] = 650.02)

Cash:

Cash (30 April 2010) \$20.00

Mosaic MasterCard:

Mosaik MasterCard (30 April 2010) \$372.18

Mutual Fund:

Mutual Fund (31 March 2010) \$4468.14

Total Assets: (Mutual Fund not up-to-date so amount not exact) \$5510.34

STC Manitoba Chapter Estimated Finances to June 30, 2010

Bank Account:

Working Balance 30 April 2010 Report: \$650.02

Income:

Transfer from Mutual Fund	2000.00	
AGM	195.00	
Interest (31 May)	0.02	
Interest (30 June)	<u>0.02</u>	
	2195.04	+2195.04
		2845.06

Expenses:

<i>Ch/Ca</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Amount</i>	
	(Student Award)	250.00	
	(Student Award)	250.00	
	(Bring a Guest)	250.00	
	(AGM)	550.00	
	(Archives and Newsletter)	168.41	
	(Publicity)	<u>28.79</u>	
		1497.20	-1497.20
			1347.86

Estimated Balance on 30 June 2010 (If all cheques cashed) \$1347.86

Cash:

Estimated Cash (30 June 2010) \$20.00

Mosaic MasterCard:

Estimated Mosaic MasterCard (30 June 2010) \$372.18

Mutual Fund:

31 March 2010	\$4468.14
Transfer to Chequing	-2000.00
Interest	<u>1.00</u>
	2469.14

Estimated Mutual Fund (30 June 2010) \$2469.14

Estimated Total Assets June 30, 2010: \$4209.88