
Statistics Concerning our Members

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From its founding in 1990 until 2014, membership in our Association has grown from 91 persons to 200, representing an increase of 120% in 25 years or 109 persons (Graphic A). This growth is striking in view of the fact that, during the same period, the total permanent population of the Township of Potton grew only by 15%, from 1592 persons to 1836.

This evolution is related to a shift of the population in Potton, from seasonal visitor to resident home owner. In 1990, 46 members claimed residence in Potton, while an almost equal number of 45 declared homes elsewhere. In 2009, the last year of our statistics on the subject, 170, or about two-thirds of our members, lived in Potton and only 78 elsewhere.

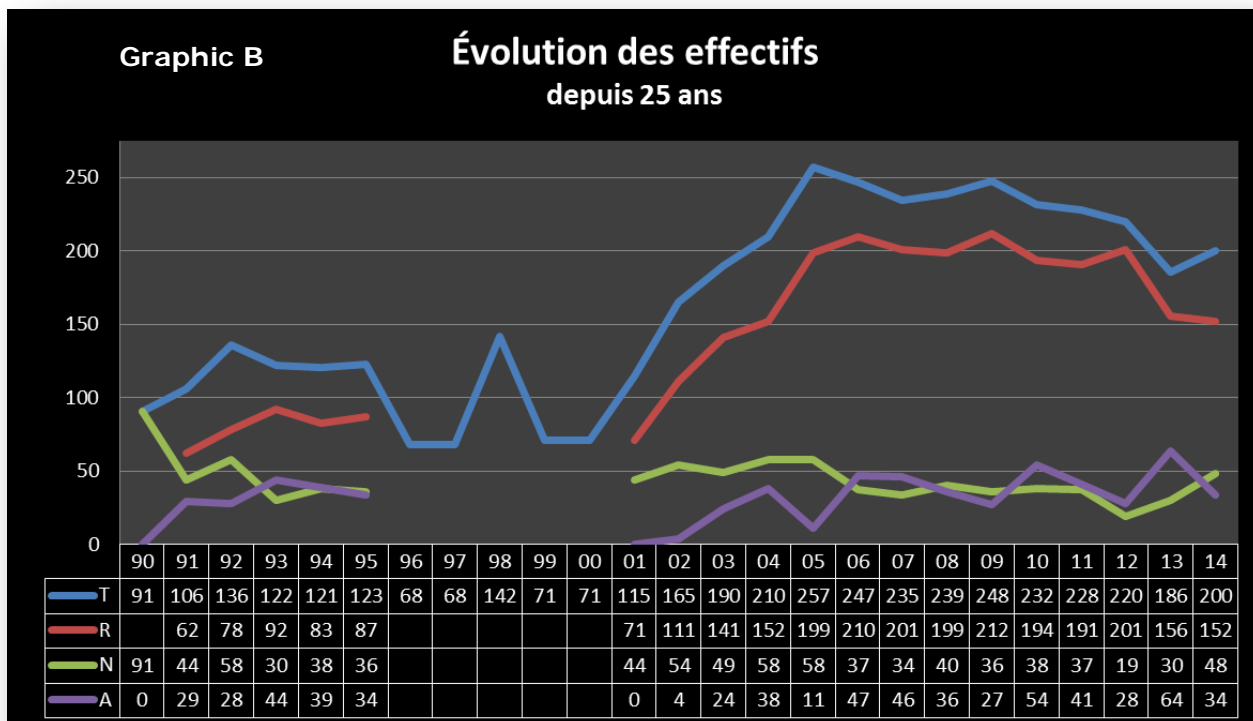
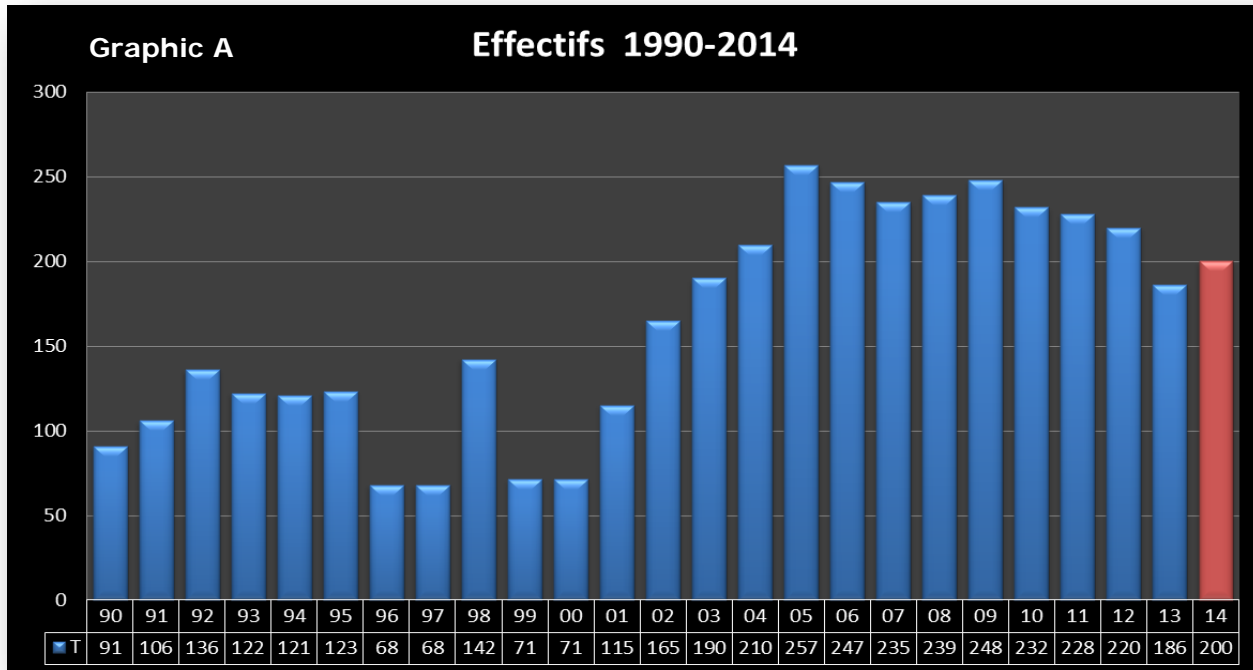
Our organization regroups residents, both permanent and seasonal, who have chosen Potton as their home, without having been born in our Township. Among other factors, a programme of heritage excursions initiated by Carol Bishop, in 2002, draw the newly-arrived to our Association in particular. Our statistics bear this out, by confirming that membership grew by 43% from the first year of these excursions. And this tendency has remained constant.

At our Annual General Meetings, we often question the lack of representation of native Pottonites among our members. This is not a new phenomenon, and has been the case since our founding. Sandra Jewett, our current President with family roots in Potton extending to the early 1800's, sees it this way: " *People who were born here certainly know about the Association and, while most seem to respect*

our initiatives, few seem comfortable within an organization such as ours. There are, of course, some exceptions like Jacques Marcoux, a member since 1991, and Paul Rouillard, a member from 1990 to 2005 and Board Director from 1993 to 2003, and me, an Association member from 1998. Pierre Giroux has always supported our initiatives, without ever having joined the Association. We will continue to invite their participation in our activities, yet with no illusions as to our chances for success. "

Michael Head, who views himself as a new-arrival even though family ties extend deeply into Potton, summarized the situation very well at the AGM of March 23th, 2014. He likened the society that is Potton to a mosaic. " *Each piece is independent of the other, but when taken together, a good overall picture of our community emerges. "* In his opinion, " *one of the essential roles of the Association is to provide a portal for new arrivals seeking to integrate into our community. This was the experience for most of our members. "* He used the example of a young family who have decided to make their home here and who are very actively involved with the youth of Potton. " *For the mosaic to be beautiful, each group must do what they do best for the future of Potton. "*

It should also be noted here that the Municipal Council, which represents the total population, has consistently supported our initiatives. This sort of recognition is indeed welcome, confirming as it does the value of our contribution to our community.



T : Total – R : Renewals – N : New – A : Abandons
 We have nor reliable data for 1996 à 2000.

Graphic B demonstrates a decline in membership for the period of 1996 to 2010. Unfortunately, our data is not reliable for some of this time frame. It was in 2005 that our membership swelled to an all-time high of 257; however, for a few years, we counted the actual number of persons within a family membership, which may have skewed the numbers. Since 2012 however, only two persons per family are included in our database. Year after year, for the first years, more members joined than left the Association, with the exception of 1993 and 1994. From 2006, that trend was reversed, except for the years 2008, 2009 and 2014. Various reasons explain departures from our aging ranks: people returning to homes in urban centers for reasons of health and proximity to health care facilities, death, the onerous burdens of property maintenance, moving closer to family domiciled elsewhere and, in some cases, reasons of employment.

We continue, however, to attract the newly arrived to our Township as Potton's total population increases gradually from year to year.

We believe that our membership role will level out at around 200, or close to 10% of the 2,223 seasonal and permanent residents of Potton. This number is still impressive, especially when other organizations in our Township are seeing a decline in paid memberships, with the exception of Cinéma Potton, which celebrates its fifth anniversary in 2015.

This overview of membership statistics must also pay particular tribute to six steadfast people who have faithfully supported the Association for these past twenty-five years:

John Haberl
G rard Leduc,
founding president
Murielle Parkes

Sophie Pukteris
Eva Waldron
Brian Waldron,
member of the Board
2000 to 2006

Six persons of the original 91 members represent a retention rate of barely 7%. For the 20 years for which reliable data exists, our statistics show a renewal rate of 76%, a departure rate of 17%, while 24% are new members. The data show an increase in membership of about 2% annually – or an average gain of 4 members per year.

Our statistics regarding the two language groups of our membership also mirrors our community language profile, one of the few Quebec officially bilingual municipalities. In 1990, the proportion of English speakers was 64%, while that of French mother tongue was 36%. In 2014, those proportions were established at 43% and 57% respectively. On this level as well, we have followed the evolution of the Township of Potton, which, from 1990 to 2014, transitioned from majority English to majority French (53%) according to 2014 Statistics Canada figures.

Finally, we must mention that in 2014, membership fees and donations represent 18% of our revenues, or \$2,700, for which we are very grateful.

The vitality of any organization rests on the support of its members. The loyalty, financial support and participation as volunteers in our activities is exemplary, and most deserving of recognition. As an Association, we are proud of our accomplishments; but we know too that, without the unflagging support of our members, these achievements would have been far fewer. Our members are the engine that propels us forward.