

Committee Reports to the LAGS AGM - February 25, 2024

1 - President's Report: Wendy Muise

This past year marks the first year of our second half-century in existence and I feel we are on the road to a vibrant future. All organizations need to evolve and adapt to changing times and we have risen to the challenge quite successfully. We have worked out the kinks of our new operating system and are reaping the benefits of its efficiency.

This is due entirely to our devoted membership, you people who give of your time and expertise to help run the show. The biggest change for us has been the staffing of the gallery totally with volunteer members. All reports from gallery sitters indicate time spent there was enjoyable and rewarding, being surrounded by inspiring art and meeting the gallery-going public, not to mention the joy of selling a piece of art for a fellow artist.

We have a dedicated board of directors, ten in all, who play an active role in delivering the services necessary to run the gallery and the society as a whole. Our financial position is stable and I'm happy to report in these times of unfortunate inflation that we are able to keep our commissions and fees at the same rate for the upcoming season.

I would like to encourage all of you members to think about joining the board at some point in the future. Turnover and fresh ideas are integral to our success. Our executive positions have a four-year limit and some of these will be up at the end of this year. Don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to hear more of what's involved.

I want to conclude with a big thank you to our committee chairs and their assistants, whose contributions enable us to spread out the workload, making involvement in the organization manageable and fun for all.

Looking forward to another successful year at the Lunenburg Art Gallery.

2 - Gallery Committee: Jennifer Harrison

Congratulations to us for another record membership in 2023! This year, all but one show (April-October) had over 100 participants (!) and sales were decent despite a roller-coaster season wrought with fires, floods and hurricanes.

We had seven shows in 2023 all with different themes including a PINK! show in June that was really special. Young visitors were delighted by Chris MacQuarrie's monthly scavenger hunt. We also sold a few pieces of jewelry by Margo Bradley, and the addition of a jewelry display in 2024 should allow us to carry more by multiple artists. We had continued success with Small Stuff, unframed prints - and new this year, the card wall and new designation of 'Tiny Originals' (cards that are not digital reproductions). Thanks to Marilyn Congdon, Merrill Heubach, Jane Holbrook, Vanessa McKiel and James Gray for their hard work this year organizing these programs. At the end of the year, we decided to add 'Bonus Days' to the schedule for volunteers who wished to sit the gallery on days we were technically closed, Terry Morris and Jane Holbrook volunteered for most of those days and it was a great opportunity for Monday visitors to have one more place to shop when many other stores in Lunenburg aren't open. Thank-you to all our hard-working volunteers who gave their time to keep us open and help promote our local artists, especially JoAnne Claire for her second year in a row signing up for the most shifts!

3 - Small Stuff Committee: Marilyn Congdon & Merrill Heubach

SMALL STUFF just completed its third year of operation within the Lunenburg Art Gallery. SMALL STUFF operates like a small exhibition space for artists displaying 3-dimensional work and small 2-dimensional art. Having this display brings additional artists to the gallery who might not necessarily have a space to exhibit their work. Many artists have been happy with the exposure SMALL STUFF has given them. SMALL STUFF uses two shelving units that are each approximately 2' long and 6' tall. These units may be used by one artist or shared by two artists depending upon the amount of work to be displayed and whether or not the work is complementary.

- 1 A new artist (or artists) is featured each month and their shows change when the Lunenburg Art Gallery shows change. In 2023 artists featured were:
 - April Arwin Falvey - Handmade Soap and Black and White Prints
 - May Anne Weeks - Photos
 - June Melanie Fontaine - Meversible Hats/Clothing, Cyanotypes
 - July Jason Remai - Pottery
 - Aug Kevin McClean - Sculpture-wood/metal, dioramas, and pottery
 - Sept Gaetane Martel - Paintings
Benoit Paradis - Paintings
 - Oct Nancy Wilkins - Functional and Sculptural Earthenware Pottery
Jo McGee Claymates Pottery Group
Mary-Ann Hiltz
Merrill Heubach
- 2 Artists are required to join the Art Gallery in order to display their work.
- 3 Artists are featured in the Lunenburg Art Gallery News Letter that Margo Bradley produces each month, and Merrill Heubach and Jennifer Harrison promoted the artists work on Social Media.
- 4 The percentage taken for commission was the same as for the rest of the gallery – 40%.
- 5 Everything in SMALL STUFF is in on consignment.

SMALL STUFF – 2023

Gross Sales	\$5,002
Artist Payments	<u>3,001</u>
Net Revenue	<u>\$2,001</u>

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM – Judging from the response to work displayed in SMALL STUFF, it was suggested that the schedule for next year’s season be predominantly 3-dimensional art work. Merrill and I are in the middle of organizing shows at this time and will try to make this a priority.

Any other thoughts or comments are most welcome.

4 – Membership: Elizabeth Kingsland

Final membership as of December 2023 was 179. This includes 62 new members and 117 renewals.

Comparison to previous years:

2022 181 total (125 renewals and 56 new members)

2021 148 total

2020 139 total

In 2023 the total membership was approximately the same as 2022. Overall membership has increased - with 139 members in 2020, 148 members in 2021 and 179 members in 2023.

5 - Treasurer’s Report: Daniel Ostromich

Hello fellow members: The Lunenburg Art Gallery Society has had yet another very successful year in 2023. The year was consistent with 2022 as our economy continues to recover from the pandemic.

Note cards and Printshop (Unframed) were new endeavors for 2022, successfully run by Jane Holbrook and Vanessa McKiel (Unframed only in 2023) and James Gray (Note cards in 2023). The items are intended to offer visitors an option for purchase that is smaller but can help draw people into the gallery. 2023 was consistent with 2022 with only a minor 10% decrease in net revenues.

Small Stuff was a new sales project in 2021 taken on by member Marilyn Congdon et al. The category was introduced to offer visitors smaller items of different art forms in order to expand the creativity available for purchase. We had a great mix of pieces available in 2023 including stone works, quilted items, printed items, sculptures, etc. and had a very successful increase of 36% in net revenues, thanks in part to the wildly popular Bronto vases by Kevin Maclean.

The Lunenburg Art Festival (LAF) was again held on the Fisherman's Museum wharf in Lunenburg. The Festival, led by Sharon Wadsworth-Smith, had its challenges in 2023 with a torrential rain storm showing up for the planned weekend, requiring a postponement to the following weekend. This unfortunately resulted in a loss of some participating artists and a loss of some of the crowds. However, the LAF committee and its many volunteers rallied beautifully and still managed to run a profitable event while putting \$4,500 into the pockets of artists.

The net Gallery revenues were consistent with our 2022 revenues and paid nearly \$19,000 to our artists. The Gallery was open from April through October and as in 2022, our members volunteered their time to attend the gallery, keeping our doors open and saving a significant cost by not having to pay an attendant. Our wonderful volunteers have now started coming in on days that we had not anticipated being open, so that during our peak summer months, we are staying open nearly 7 days a week. A huge thank you to all of you who volunteer your time, we couldn't do it without you.

Other sales in the gallery included the Earl Bailly posters, introduced in 2022 as part of our 50th anniversary celebration, as well as jewelry sales, introduced this year.

Regarding expenses, our non-discretionary costs, which include rent, utilities, internet, insurance, etc. and which account for approximately 70 to 80% of our total expenses, have remained consistent year over year. Our discretionary spending including advertising, courier costs, office supplies and miscellaneous expenses is down 50% year over year. In 2022, we had printing and shipping of gallery brochures and Earl Bailly posters, a supply for multiple years. 2023 did see a re-introduction of First Fridays by several art galleries in Lunenburg. We happily participated in these and found it to be a great way to promote the gallery.

While we do our best to control our costs, including non-discretionary, we experience the effect of inflation at the gallery just as we do at home. While we have just successfully negotiated a new agreement for our largest non-discretionary cost, rent, it does include a 20% increase year over year but is for a 2 year term. Our second largest cost, insurance, increased 9% in 2023 over 2022 and will no doubt increase again in the coming year. We continue to find ways to decrease our discretionary spending, and with our success in this area, we fortunately will be able to maintain our commissions at 40% for the coming year.

6 - Student Exhibition: Jennifer Harrison

Once again, our teachers out-did themselves with some beautiful work from our local students, grades 6-12. We had participating classes from Bayview Community School, Bluenose Academy, New Germany Rural High School, Forest Heights Community School and Park View Education Centre. Highlights included some colourful relief prints from New Germany, some pour art from Bayview and a woven paper class collaboration from Park View. Looking forward to another exceptional show in 2024!

7 - Earl Bailly Collection: James Gray

Cataloguing and organizing the collections at Town Hall and the Lunenburg Art Gallery was completed in late 2023. As a result of our efforts all paintings have been located. Thank you to Jennifer Harrison for adding the digital files for both collections to the LAGS website.

Binders were created with a photo-catalogue of the complete collection. One binder is at LAGS, the other binder is in the possession of our contact at Town Hall.

Posters from the 50th Anniversary Exhibit of Earl Bailly's work continued to be available for purchase during the 2023 season.

Looking ahead to 2024:

A follow up meeting with the Town of Lunenburg to review safe storage, cataloguing, displaying, and insuring of all the works.

The "recruitment of additional committee members" has been slow, but our door is always open.

We do not envision any marketing of EB art prints until after we have created a good foundation of information on **Earl Bailly** himself. Jan Hull and James Gray will outline next steps and recruit additional members when ready.

Thank you to Jan Hull for enduring this process with me. I appreciated her perseverance and wisdom while we worked through the cataloging process.

8 - Policy and Procedures: Joanne Young

Updated LAGS organization chart and committee roles as developed and approved by the Board. Provided input on an as required basis, by reviewing application regulations and laws applicable to LAGS.

9 - LAGS News & Updates: Margo Bradley

LAGS produced twelve newsletter editions in 2023. All publications are available to view at our website, www.lunenburgartgallery.com. Our mandate is to provide readers information about LAGS events and activities and to invite members and subscribers to engage in them, as well as present our Lunenburg Art Society in a way that will encourage support from artists, artisans, art lovers and the public.

At present we hold approximately 531 subscribers, an increase from 472 in 2022. Anyone can subscribe to our newsletter via our website whether they are a member or not, and those who purchase a membership are automatically added to our subscriber/newsletter database.

As in previous years, we continued in 2023 to receive positive feedback from readers, such as, "thank you to LAGS and volunteers for supporting artists" or "thank you for sharing this news". Subscribers are invited and encouraged at the bottom of each newsletter to submit content, comments or questions using the newsletter email address at newsletter@lunenburgartsociety.ca. In 2023, we had a number of member article submissions highlighting a current show of work, held either at the LAGS or in another venue. These articles were well presented and helped to advertise our LAGS off season gallery rental opportunities.

In 2023 we continued to feature a member's artwork as introduction at the top of each newsletter edition. The chosen work comes from the current or past month's exhibit inventory during the gallery open months, and the art usually reflects the season or month in which the newsletter is published. This feature enhances the look of the newsletter, provides member visibility and inspires creativity. An electronic file has been created that captures these monthly features and includes the publication date, artist name, title and medium, for LAGS records. We continued publishing the "Upcoming Member Events" section that was started in 2022, where members can share their advertisements. We also continued to publish our "Small Stuff" section that highlighted the work of those artists who displayed during the monthly installation. Lastly, and as a result of the 2022, 50th Anniversary Celebration, we continued the Earl Bailly feature excerpts, from Earl Bailly's 1957 self-published autobiography: 'Earl Bailly - His Trials & Triumphs'. This ongoing feature contained 24 sections and we have now published 15, with intentions to continue until the end of the autobiography.

As we enter 2024, we plan to continue publishing an informative and meaningful newsletter, as well as encourage new and fresh content on an ongoing basis. In addition to the newsletter publications, we will continue to communicate directly with members through targeted emails, regarding show requirements and monthly intake/outtake information. These separate emails help to reduce repetition and information overload in the newsletter as not all subscribers are members, nor participate in the monthly shows. LAGS experienced an active and successful 2023 and looks forward to communicating with members and subscribers in 2024.

10 - Rental of Premises: Terry Morris

Overall, the gallery has had a good rental season. This is in terms of number of days rented, and the number of members that rented. New rental fees were implemented on Jan 1, 2023. These new fees are posted on the Galley's website.

The annual painting of the gallery walls took place on March 27, 2023. The floor was given a scrub and wash at this time to brighten it back up. This was accomplished by three volunteer members. Then at the start of November the lights of the gallery were tended to - burnt bulbs replaced and fixtures repaired.

New was an after-hour rental during the regular gallery season. This was for a book signing in July, which lasted 2 hours. This event went well, and other events of these kinds should be considered.

November and December continue to be the top two months for Gallery rentals during the off season. There were 38 rental days this past year, 6 more than the previous year. For renters, there were 9 parties this past year 3 more than 2022. Of these parties, only two were returning renters from the previous year.

The responses from the rental parties about the facilities and their usage have been positive overall. All renters followed guidelines and left the facility in good shape.

11 - Lunenburg Arts Fest: Sharon Wadsworth-Smith

It was certainly a memorable weekend! Due to the unprecedented weather, we had to change the dates of the LAF Festival to the following weekend. Thankfully, the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic was open to us doing that and leaving the large tent set up. We did have to set up the grids and small tents again though. Special thanks to our last-minute volunteers who came through for us again.

- Vender booths: We lost three tents, and had to shuffle our booths but it worked out. We also ended up with one last minute display of outdoor art furniture which looked amazing.
- Susan changed the dates and adjusted all the signage, Wow!
- Hillary at the Town was happy to extend our dates for signage. We have a running permit for the next 4 years without having to re-apply, we just need to let them know the dates in advance.
- Our profits were lower than last year's given the date change, lost participants and visitor income. We purchased new gridwalls which we will have to pay for over the next three years.
- We had an accident in the tent with wet art work. We need ideas to prevent this from happening again.

We have questions that will need to be addressed for the coming year: Are we looking at staying at our existing outdoor location or returning to an indoor venue? Are we able to keep some of our committee members and/or able to encourage member involvement?

I have booked the Fisheries space for next year July 20th and 21st as they do not charge us anything for pre-booking. They may not have any small tents available, but suggested the big dome tents as alternates.

That will be something that will be discussed this year by the new Chairperson and remaining and new committee members. I will not be returning as Chair this year and will no longer be available for board meetings due to other personal commitments. I will remain reachable in the future to mentor anyone who wishes to pursue the Chair position and I have detailed notes available for the LAF.

Thank you all for your patience and commitment over the past three years. It has been both fun and a challenge at times, but certainly a project that I think benefitted artists, the public and the community of Lunenburg and could continue to do so.

12 - Printshop: Jane Holbrooke & Vanessa McKiel

This marked the second successful season for the Lunenburg Art Gallery's print racks for unframed works. The racks were filled with a vibrant collection of original prints, watercolours, photographs and reproductions of artwork. There were 22 members (up from 20 in 2022) involved, each with up to 4 unique pieces in the rack at any one time.

The gallery netted \$1,292 from this venture, which represents a 40% commission on the sale of 42 unframed pieces of art. This was down a bit from 2022 during which the gallery sold 48 unframed pieces and netted \$1,486.

The Printshop was managed by Vanessa McKiel and Jane Holbrook, who will continue on as Printshop volunteers for the 2024 season.

13 - Cards: James Gray

It was another successful year for card sales at the Lunenburg Art Gallery. In May 2023, the Gallery purchased 241 cards from 20 members (up from 18 in 2022) and an additional 107 cards were purchased in the summer for a total of 348 cards for the 2023 season.

Cards not yet sold were packed up at the end of October and will be ready for sale in the 2024 season. There were a total of 131 single cards unsold and 5 sets of a 4 card pack, 2 sets of a 6 card pack and 2 packs of a 4 card pack.

Thank you to the members who participated in the card sales for the 2023 season.

Look for information in the spring LAGS Newsletters regarding interest in selling your cards and subsequent intake dates. The card shop was managed by James Gray who will continue on as the card shop volunteer for the 2024 season. A big thank you to Jennifer Harrison for bar-coding all the cards, your support is very much appreciated.