

Committee Reports to the LAGS AGM – Feb 27, 2022

1. President's Report: Wendy Muise

This being the end of my first year as president of the Lunenburg Art Gallery Society I welcome the opportunity to reflect on how it played out. In spite of COVID still being with us and rearing its ugly head again in late spring I'm happy to report that everything ran smoothly. All challenges were met, and we had a financially successful year.

This year saw the launch of our new annual event, the Lunenburg Arts Fest, designed to include artisans and studio artists as well as plein air painters. Sharon Wadsworth-Smith led a team of volunteers to create a successful event on the waterfront at the Fisheries Museum wharf.

There is renewed interest in our collection of Earl Bailly paintings, the donation of which led to the formation of the Lunenburg Art Gallery 50 years ago. Planning has begun on celebration of this auspicious event over the coming season.

My job as president has been an easy one in that our team of directors and member volunteers has made it so. There has been no shortage of people keen to help, both in the gallery and behind the scenes. We have a very strong board of directors and a dedicated arts community that all contribute to our ongoing success.

The one disappointing aspect of this past year has been the inability to do anything of a social nature. I note that when members fill out their application forms, most check the box that says, "I want to meet with fellow artists." Hopefully 2022 will be the year when we can once again have openings on the first Friday of every month and have committee meetings in person. That said, Zoom has been a blessing enabling us to continue working and "meeting" with our fellow committee members no matter how near or far. So, I for one am looking forward to a Lunenburg Art Gallery Society that provides fraternity for the arts community as well as financial success for its artists.

2. Gallery Committee: Wendy Muise

The Lunenburg Art Gallery had a very good year in spite of COVID restrictions, including being closed through May and most of June. We began the season with our ever-popular Schools Exhibition showing the work of talented students from four local schools. Many thanks to Shirley Abberton and Jennifer Harrison for pulling this together. April featured the Mahone Bay Printmakers and the Ottawa-Gatineau Print Connective in a collaborative show alongside works by our members. Then we were into another lockdown until late June when we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Bluenose with members showing work with a Bluenose theme. This show was featured in a video film about the Bluenose 100 Celebrations and included interviews with some of our member artists. The rest of the season went without a hitch thanks to our many dedicated member volunteers who staffed the gallery very efficiently. Our newly minted Small Stuff display offered work by four artisans. We wrapped up at the end of October having generated substantial sales for our member artists. All in all, it was a year to be proud of.

3. Small Stuff Committee: Marilyn Congdon & Merrill Heubach

SMALL STUFF operated like a small exhibition space during the 2021 Lunenburg Art Gallery season.

1. An artist was featured each month and changed when the Lunenburg Art Gallery shows changed. In 2021 artists featured:
 - a. Rick Silas – Cold Glass Worker – July
 - b. Charles Weiss – Wood Carver – Fish – August
 - c. Marla Benton – Potter – September
 - d. Liza Hageraats – Fiber Artist – October
2. Artists were required to join the Lunenburg Art Gallery to display their work.
3. Artists were featured in the Newsletter that Margo Bradley organizes for the Lunenburg Art Gallery each month, and Merrill Heubach advertised the artists on Social Media.
4. The percentage taken for commission was the same as for the rest of the gallery.
5. Everything was taken in on consignment.

In summary, we think that the SMALL STUFF exhibitions were successful. They created interest in the gallery as a place to see art that can't be hung on the walls.

4. Membership: Les French

2021 was a successful year, with **148 members**: 98 renewals from previous years + 50 new members, in addition to our 7 Life members. This was an increase from our 139 members in 2020; not quite back to our 2019 (pre-Covid) total - 156.

Our fillable PDF membership application + dues e-transfer option seem to be making the process easier.

74% of our members have stated willingness to help and supplied areas of interest. Our members rock!

Much credit and thanks are due to Jennifer Harrison (Website) and Margo Bradley (Newsletter) for their outstanding efforts in heightening membership awareness.

5. Treasurer's Report: James Gray

Hello fellow members: 2021 has been a very successful year for the Lunenburg Art Gallery Society. A review of the year as compared to 2020 shows the successes we had while navigating the moving target of Covid restrictions.

Small Stuff was a new sales project for 2021 taken on by member Marilyn Congdon et al. As a new project in our COVID world, it was introduced in July and monitored through October for future potential.

The Lunenburg Art Festival (LAF) replaced the previous Paint Sea on Site Festival last held in 2019. Overall, the Festival, led by Sharon Wadsworth-Smith, was very successful with its reimagining given the challenges of the current situation. Thank you to the members of the LAF committee for their skillful organization.

The net Gallery sales themselves were up 165% over our 2020 sales. This increase is in part to the dedication of the volunteer staff sitting in the gallery and the online sales facilitated through social media. The Gallery was open from April through October and without our members volunteering their time, we would not have been able to open the Gallery.

With continued support from our landlord, as well as very successful Gallery rentals to our members in the off-season, we were able to keep our rental costs fairly consistent with 2020 levels. Likewise, the remainder of our costs also remained consistent with the prior year.

In total, our expenses increased year over year by less than \$400 while revenues increased by more than \$4,000. A very successful year thanks again to our dedicated volunteer members.

6. Student Exhibition: Jennifer Harrison & Shirley Abberton

The 2021 School Show was successful despite a few hinderances. Uncertainty about the gallery lease agreement prolonged planning so teachers weren't notified until early 2021, and uncertainty around COVID and schools shutting down prevented many of the usual schools from participating.

In the end we still had a substantial amount of artwork from Forest Heights Community School, New Germany Rural Highschool, Parkview Education Centre and Bluenose Academy. Kelly Barker at NGRH contributed a large-scale installation of 70 separate artworks (9" x 9") each that represented the lyrics to a song by Quentrel Provo "Stop the Violence and Spread the Love". Audrey Nichol from PVEC brought a selection of self portraits and Rebecca Fisk's FHCS class had a large variety of mediums and subject matter. Trevor McMullen's BA class had paper mâché sculptures as well as still-life, screen printing and perspective drawing.

The show was highlighted daily on Facebook & Instagram and received very positive feedback. Participating teachers were presented with thank-you cards and \$20 gift certificates from Printer's Corner in Blockhouse. Attendance at the gallery was especially good on weekends and during March Break and over 250 people came to visit the show in person.

We look forward to another successful show in 2022 with 9 participating classes from 6 different schools.

7. Earl Bailly Collection: Jan Hull and James Gray, co-chairs

Our 2021 Annual Report ended with this:

"Cataloguing and organizing will be tackled in 2021. We do not envision any marketing of EB art prints until after we have created a good foundation of information about Earl Bailly himself. Jan Hull and James Gray will outline next steps and recruit additional members when ready."

James and Jan did commence cataloguing and organizing, working around covid interruptions.

We purchased a compact unit, designed and built locally, which can store many medium-size and smaller pieces when not on display.

We began to locate and identify the works that are in Town Hall. Many have no identification attached to them, so we've tried to match them to lists with ambiguous titles. Works from the two components of the Collection--those owned entirely by LAGS and those we co-own with the Town of Lunenburg--are found at both sites.

Joanne Young spent considerable time reviewing and scanning Bailly documents. We hope to get this asset on our website so it can be shared with future researchers.

Looking ahead to 2022:

After we complete the inventory, we hope to produce a reliable photo-catalogue of the complete collection which will also be posted online.

We will meet with 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.

As part of the LAGS' 50th anniversary celebrations, there will be an exhibit of selected Earl Bailly paintings in the gallery during June and July.

8. Human Resources: Joanne Young

2021 as we all know was another year of unusual (we hope) circumstances. Once again, we operated the Society and managed the Gallery solely with the efforts of volunteers. As a non-profit organization we operate under a volunteer Board with the valued support of Committee members and other volunteers. Volunteers also managed the Gallery under Covid protocols; this included masking, social distancing, and capacity limitations. These aspects also applied to gallery rental space in the off-season of our normal operations. We continued to monitor the changing restrictions and adapted where necessary to changes. Work on organizing file materials and updating policy is an ongoing activity. I send huge thanks to all of the volunteers who continue to support LAG, especially as we plan this, our 50th anniversary year.

9. LAS News & Updates: Margo Bradley

LAGS produced eleven newsletter editions in 2021. All publications are available to view at our website, www.lunenburgartgallery.com. Our newsletter mandate is to invite readers to engage in LAGS activities and benefits, and to present our society in a way that will encourage support from artists, artisans, art lovers and the public.

At present we hold approximately 392 subscribers, an increase from approximately 350 in 2020. Anyone can subscribe to our newsletter via our website whether they are a member or not, and when an individual purchases a membership, they are automatically added to our subscriber database.

Frequently, we receive positive feedback from readers, such as "a newsletter well done" or "thank you LAGS for supporting artists". Subscribers are invited and encouraged at the bottom of each newsletter to submit content, comments or questions via the newsletter email address at newsletter@lunenburgartsociety.ca.

New features were added to the newsletter in 2021. Each edition now opens with a photo of a member's art, intended to enhance the look of the NL, provide member visibility and inspire creativity. We added a "Members Showcase" section to invite member artists to submit an article and photos of a recent event they may have held. And we included a section called "Gallery Buzz" to encourage gallery rentals and a section called "Small Stuff" that coincides with the regular monthly All Members Show.

As we roll into 2022, we will continue to publish an informative and meaningful newsletter. Note that the May 2021 edition was interrupted by the gallery closure due to a province wide COVID lock down. Because business as usual was not the case in spring 2021, LAGS created special direct emails to active gallery members only, to inform them about the closure and special instructions around intake/outtake. May 2021 communication was followed by a regular newsletter edition on June 12, 2021. Additional direct email to members only, on various subject matter when required continued throughout the remainder of 2021 and is now regular LAGS news and updates practice.

LAGS experienced an active and successful 2021 despite continued challenges during the global pandemic. LAGS looks forward to sharing news, information and feedback with members and subscribers in 2022.

10. Rental of Premises: Les French

A valuable membership benefit is the chance to rent our spectacular Gallery in the off-season – Nov-Feb. The benefit wasn't lost on our members this year; we got off to a great start with 46 days booked during November and December.

Rental details, real-time availability calendar + a fillable PDF rental agreement are on our website. Opportunities still exist for February! It's a terrific way to host a solo or group show.

And remember, the rental program is good for the Gallery, too. We have the constant financial challenge of 12 months expenses, with only an 8-month exhibition season. Rental income helps us keep the doors open.

11. Lunenburg Art Fest: Sharon Wadsworth-Smith

The beginning of 2021 was filled with uncertainty as to whether we could hold the newly reimagined Lunenburg Arts Fest. The task turned into a wonderful experience working with a committee that was willing to step up to the plate with ideas and many volunteers that committed their time and energy to this project.

It was received enthusiastically by both the public and the artists and things look good for the future of LAF on the wharf. Some changes to the event last year included:

- We were located outdoors in a large tent on the wharf.
- For the first time, we included non-Plein air artists in display areas.
- We eliminated the auction portion to better utilize volunteers and to let clients take art with them immediately.

Some of our changes were due to the COVID restrictions such as

- The date had to remain flexible based on restrictions (changed from our original weekend to a much later one.)
- Because of the inconsistency of a firm date, we were unable to date any of our signage or have any paid advertising.
- All of our outdoor guests had to leave contact info and be masked in tent.
- We could not provide food for our artists or volunteers.

We had 50 artists participating and 50 sales though some artists had more sales than others. Despite the hurdles we climbed we were encouraged by the donor support and the positive feedback we received. The Fisheries Museum was instrumental in the success of our 20th Anniversary Year! The Peggy's Cove Festival Association loan of their grid panels was a real benefit and we will add more to our own collection for next year.

We are planning sooner this year and hope to be able to have a slightly larger event that could to involve the community and local businesses more. We've identified areas that we can improve on and received great ideas from a survey that we sent to the participants.

Our committee is already at work on this and we are looking for a few more volunteers to prepare for 2022!

12. Cards/Prints: Jane Holbrook & Vanessa McKiel

In the fall of 2021, members Jane Holbrook & Vanessa McKiel put forward a proposal for the sale of notecards and unframed works in the gallery in 2022. The proposal was accepted by the Lunenburg Art Gallery Society Board in November 2021.

The gallery has agreed to spending up to \$1,000 on notecards from interested members (at 50% of the selling price) in late March.

The gallery has also agreed to having interested members register unframed works in March which will be housed in a new rack until sold (or picked up at the end of the season if unsold). The minimum price for unframed works is to be \$30, and the gallery will earn the usual 40% commission on sales of unframed works.

The number of notecards and/or unframed works per member will be determined by the level of interest and the available space. To date there are nine members interested in selling notecards and eight members interested in bringing in unframed works. Racks for housing the notecards and unframed works are being constructed and will be ready by the beginning of April. Members can still indicate interest in either or both of these opportunities by emailing Jane and Vanessa at printshop@lunenburgartsociety.ca by Feb 28th.