

**President's report to FAA Annual General Meeting
February 15, 2012
Submitted by Katie FitzRandolph**

At our last Annual General meeting, we were concerned about the future for the Fredericton Arts Alliance. A loss of funding had left us with no option but to lay off our one part-time staffer and move to full volunteer mode. I am happy to report that we have survived a full year on this basis, thanks to an extremely hard working and dedicated board, whom I must thank profusely for their work and their support.

Charitable status

As a registered charity, we have been able to tap into previously unavailable sources of funding, and we are grateful for the individuals and groups who have added a little extra to their memberships to help us along – to the tune of more than \$2,000.

Membership

The FAA has a paid membership of almost 110, most of them individuals. Fifteen are organizations and three are corporations. Memberships brought in approximately \$2,000 in 2011.

Arts News

Our free weekly electronic listing of everything happening in Fredericton's rich cultural life, now in its eleventh year, remains our best-known project. Under the capable hands of Amani Wassef, it goes out every week to about 1,500 subscribers.

This project depends on the volunteer support of board member Russ Hunt, who keeps our mailing list up to date. *Arts News* lives on a grant of \$6,000 from the City of Fredericton, a minuscule sum in the context of the city's budget, but a hugely important sum for the continuation of a key link in Fredericton's cultural infrastructure. Last year, this grant looked to be in jeopardy, but I am delighted to report that as a result of people letting their city councillors know how important *Arts News* is – we have been wrapped into the city's budget and no longer even have to apply for the funding to keep it going. This is a huge step forward.

www.frederictonartsalliance.ca

Our revamped website – frederictonartsalliance.ca - is still a work in progress, as we work out how best to communicate, and what people want and need from us. The addition of PayPal allows people to renew their memberships (and make donations) electronically, and this has proved a convenience for many supporters. With the initiative of Vice-President Jean Rooney, we also have a presence on Facebook.

Artists in Residence program

We returned to the Officers' Barracks last summer, after a year in the Fredericton Region Museum, and managed to operate for the full 16 weeks that the "casemates" were open. We had a total of 28 artists in 32 week-long residencies and each artist received a \$400 honorarium. Something approaching 7,000 visitors dropped in on our artists for conversations about their work, their inspiration, the technical details of their media and so on. Over the summer, we showcased painters in oils, acrylics, watercolour and

encaustic. We had silversmiths, fibre artists, potters, photographers, print makers, sculptors, writers and musicians. Feedback from visitors and artists alike was positive and encouraging. The residencies culminated in a group exhibition in the City Hall Gallery, with plans still in the works for exhibitions at the Royal Bank's Northside and Queen Street branches.

In addition to a \$2,500 grant from the RBC exhibition grant, the Artists in Residence program received support from the City's Arts and Heritage Program (\$4,500), Downtown Development (\$1,000), and a provincial Partnership Grant (\$3,000). This year we also had sponsorships - \$400 to cover an artist for a week - from Fellows Architects, St. Thomas University, Ingrid Mueller Arts+Concepts and Isaac's Way Restaurant. The honoraria for participating artists came to \$12,800 for 2011, with the remaining \$1,800 in costs coming from FAA's own fund-raising. We also are grateful for some in-kind support from UNB.

Art Trek

This was the one piece of our traditional yearly program that had to go by the wayside. There just was not the time and resources to organize the fall studio tour. Our new board can re-examine this decision, but the howls of outrage were muted, and maybe it is time for someone else to take this on and organize it, or vary it. We are open for ideas and proposals.

High on the Arts

Our third annual fund-raising gala, on Sept. 29 was even more successful than the year before. Our committee began meeting regularly in February. Special thanks to Sabine Campbell, Renée Davis, Myrna Gunter, and George Strunz for their hard and faithful work in making this a success. We were able to offer attendees a chance to bid on some outstanding art works as well as an interesting range of smaller silent auction items. Artists were offered 50 per cent of the selling price of their works, so we're not another organization calling on artists to subsidize our efforts through donations.

Arts and Culture Forum

The federal election prompted yet another in our series of election forums on arts issues. This year we expect to see a municipal forum.

Fredericton Social Innovation

The FAA sits on the stewardship committee of Fredericton Social Innovation, in an effort to ensure that issues affecting the arts are not swept aside by other concerns.

The board

I'd like to thank our board members for their work throughout the year on - as you can see - a wide range of issues.

Vice president Jean Rooney

Treasurer Sabine Campbell

Secretary Kim Vose Jones

And board members Renée Davis, Russ Hunt, Myrna Gunter, Marie Maltais, Penny Pacey, and George Strunz,

We had the support of a terrific summer student through a federal grant from HRDC. Claire Gallant took over most of running the Artists in Residence and did a wonderful job.

They have been a good team and it has been a pleasure working with them all.

Conclusion

Last year, I ended my report with the question was it worth carrying on, and the members at the meeting concluded that indeed the FAA still had work to do and a purpose to serve. Thanks to that support and vote of confidence we are still alive and kicking, and actually in much better financial shape than we were a year ago – albeit without staff support.

Thank you for your commitment to the arts in Fredericton. I think we are around for the duration, which is a lot more positive than I felt a year ago.