

Art Gallery of Bancroft holds its annual general meeting

By Chris Drost

The Art Gallery of Bancroft held its annual general meeting in-person at the gallery on the evening of Oct. 14, with a dozen board and AGB members in attendance.

President of the AGB, Hugh Monteith, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. "It looks like we are surviving the fourth wave," he said. He followed by acknowledging all the volunteers who have made it possible to keep the doors open.

The past year has been a challenging one for the gallery as it was not able to open for a number of months. Regardless, "we managed to have an exhibition schedule that was varied," said Monteith. The AGB re-opened in April only to have close again a week later. The show at the time had to be moved to a virtual format, as did the show Underneath, that followed.

During the winter, thanks to a Local Initiatives Program grant through Community Futures Development Corporation, the gift shop was re-imagined and re-designed. The work also included a re-branding of the gift shop. Working with two students from Loyalist College in Belleville in the advertising and marketing program, "Out of the Box Gifts" emerged as the new name for the gift shop. A comprehensive strategy for using the brand will be a guide for the AGB going forward. "It was a team of dedicated volunteers who helped transform the gift shop," said Monteith. The centre wall was moved to add more floor space and wall space and the walls were all painted and new boxes or crates replaced the previous cabinetry to fit with the new brand. While not part of the grant, the storage area was also revamped with a new floor and storage.

With funds from the LIP grant, the AGB was able to launch an online store for the first time. This was especially helpful during the period the shop was closed. Marketing materials and radio ads were also developed.

"The AGB is grateful to have received two \$1,000 donations in the past year, one from the Baptiste Lake Yoga group and the other from an anonymous donor.

The fence at the location of the former Victorian Lady shop on Hastings St. has become an outdoor gallery in the past year, including an area for kids work.

"I think we have weathered the worst and with Out of the Box Gifts, are on our way to a successful year," added Monteith.

Monteith took time to address the top priorities in the AGB's strategic plan.

Efforts have been made over the past year towards the development of a long-range financial strategy.

The AGB has also done well in recruiting and providing training for new volunteers for Out of the Box Gifts.

"We have done very well towards a new renovation strategy for the gift shop. There has been a positive response and the new inventory has been moving out," said Monteith.

The Loyalist students provided the AGB with a very good branding and marketing strategy during the past year "but it bears reviewing," explained Monteith. There are lots of suggestions for branding that need to be incorporated.

Membership retention and growth was the final of the top five priorities for the year. Unfortunately, the numbers were down this year because of COVID-19. "We need to focus on it again, and also sponsorships, donor recruitment and re-visiting the potential for hiring a part-time person," added Monteith.

Following Monteith's remarks, Leilah Ward of the curatorial committee presented a slide show of the artists who have been scheduled for the monthly exhibitions in 2022.

Exhibition schedule 2022

? January - Continuation of Juried Art show which opened December, 2021

? February/March - Closed

? April - Jessica Linn - Paintings ? There's No Place Like Home

? May - Tanya Fenkell - Watercolour ? Emotional Landscapes

? June - Melinda Shank-Miles ? paintings - Fragile

? July - Freddie Towe ? collage/mixed media ? This Day

? August - Ketha Newman ? paintings/prints - PAiNtDEMIC!

September - Larry Ostrom ? Photo-based art ? Back to the Earth

? October - Anne Hoover ? figurative drawings/paintings ? Figuring it Out

? November - TBA

? December - Juried Show

The new board for the coming year was also approved, Hugh Monteith, Paul Jenkins, Carol Kirby, Nancy Wilson, Dora Yateman, Leilah Ward and new director, Larry Ostrom.