

Artists gather for holiday carnival

By Sherwood Hines

It was a packed house at the annual Holiday Art Carnival at A Place for the Arts on Dec. 17. With arts and crafts for the kids, a holiday themed photo booth, live music, classic yuletide stories, mulled cider, homemade hot chocolate, and a community potluck there was something for everyone.

The highlight of the day was the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Claus (or Santa's helpers Harold and Dianne Eastman). Unfortunately, Santa's suit was at the dry cleaners getting spiffed up for his upcoming big day, so he had to entertain the crowd in his red one-piece set of long-johns.

The Holiday Art Carnival was A Place for the Arts community celebration of their second year located at 23 Bridge St. For founding member Harold Eastman, the packed house was a culmination of two years of hard work trying to bring A Place for the Arts to fruition.

"We really didn't know what would happen," Eastman noted. "We were looking to create a space for supporting stimulating ideas about art and culture. There are so many creative types in the Bancroft region, and it is obvious today, that there is a lot of support in the community for what we are trying to do. The number of people who came out for the carnival totally exceeded my expectations." For Monica Lumley-Piercey, who recently moved to the Bancroft area, A Place for the Arts has been a great surprise. "I love the sense of community, and the sense of inclusiveness that comes with A Place for the Arts. They support art in all its forms. It's been really wonderful becoming part of this community."

Carnival goers were invited to participate in the creation of a community mandala. A sheet of paper covered the back wall, and with boxes of markers and pencil crayons people are encouraged to add to the ever-widening rings of colour. By the end of the night the mandala was almost two meters in diameter.

The incredibly talented musician Stevie Wutnot kept the audience entertained all afternoon. At 6 p.m., the Place for the Arts monthly Satori commenced. This is an open call to musicians, singers, percussionists, soundmakers, to gather for a musical jam session. All skill levels are welcome. About 30 people gathered in a circle to create three hours of great music and bring the day's festivities to a close.

For Freddie Towe, who moved to Bancroft almost two years ago, it is all about connecting with other artists. "I love the art community here, the feeling that all skill levels can come here. I love being in Bancroft and being so close to nature. It's really wonderful."

For Ken, the Holiday Art Carnival was a great way for new Bancroft residents to mingle with long-time locals. "The carnival reflects the creative spirit of Bancroft. Living in Hybla and having A Place for the Arts to come to has made moving to Bancroft that much more than we ever expected."

"I'm really over the moon about how much A Place for the Arts has grown in this last year," noted Eastman. "So many different types of artists and people interested in art have visited us this year. The exchange of ideas has been fabulous. We are really excited to see what happens with the space in 2017."

For more information on A Place for the Arts check out its website, or Facebook page. A Place for the Arts winter hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.