

MERA AGM 2017

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

It is a privilege to report to you on MERA's activities for 2016.

As of this present year, MERA is 20 years old! Twenty years! And going strong! This is especially gratifying given that we have not had a grant for operating expenses for 4 years now and yet, as you will hear from Bob Minge, have ended the year with a small surplus.

MERA continued to bring diverse activities to the community in 2016. Ongoing activities included:

- the Around the World on a Dinner Plate which were routinely sold out. This present year's dinners celebrated Canada's 150th with a Canadian theme and were also well attended
- the Children's Summer Arts Camp, Book Club monthly, weekly dance group, stained glass classes, weekly fiber arts groups
- and continuing music activities, including the recorder classes with a new beginners group starting and some Sunday afternoon concerts, both contemporary and classical music
- the Christmas Fair raised \$3,300 in 2016 with significant contributions from the Fiber Arts group. We have Marilyn Barnett to thank for organizing many years of successful Christmas Fairs. For the coming year a committee has been struck to divide up the organizing tasks, with Lyndal Neelin coordinating and Marilyn advising

New activities in 2016 included:

- a Wassail Night in early January, a very pleasant evening with a choir under Hilary Barrett and flute music by Helen Mogford. This was repeated in January 2017 so looks to become a tradition
- the Community Choir and Ukulele classes – lots of music going on!
- the Beer, Cheese and Chocolate Tasting evening in November which raised \$400 for MERA. The evening featured 3 local businesses: Back Forty Artisan Cheese, Ludwig Ratzinger's Chocolate and the Stalwart Brewing Company
- in the Fall, the Stone Labyrinth was laid out with thyme planted from the original willow labyrinth. More later
- in preparation for MERA's 20th anniversary, a committee was established to plan imaginative ways to celebrate. There already has been the Canadian-themed dinners, on 5 August there will be a Community Dinner, Dance and Lantern Parade supported by a grant of \$2000 from the Perth and District Community Foundation. Also, a Founders and Directors Dinner will be held on 7 April to thank those who established MERA and made MERA what it is today. A Fall event is still being planned

I also want to note that a competition for the MERA Award of Excellence in Fine Arts and Fine Crafts is being held this present year. The deadline for submissions is 30 April and the winners will be honoured at a reception on 16 June.

And so 2016 was a busy year, and 2017 is already moving along with many successful activities. All of which could not happen without the help of our hard working administrator, Marilyn Barnett. Many thanks, Marilyn!