

AMERA Annual General Meeting 2023



AMERA (McDonalds Corners/Elphin Recreation & Arts)

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: March 19th, 2023

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Agenda for MERA's Annual General Meeting March 19th 2023

AGENDA

A. Welcome by Chair of the MERA Board Barry Russell

B. Introduction of Guests – *No guests.*

C. Approval of Agenda – *Helen Mogford, Erica Riley and all.*

D. Approval of the AGM Minutes of March 20, 2022 – *Tom Shoebridge, Elaine Wilson and all.*

E. Presentation of Annual Report of the Board of Directors - Chair of the MERA Board Barry Russell

F. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Financial Statements for 2022 Budget: Peter Cochrane

G. 2022 Committee Reports:

a. Programming Committee – Timothy Booth

b. Pottery Studio – Jan Griffiths

c. Art Circle – Helen Mogford

d. Music Committee – Peter Cochrane

e. MERA Heritage Weavers – Erica Riley

f. Building Committee – David Wilson

g. Fundraising Committee – Louise Ennis

h. Fibre Arts Report – Marilyn Nicholas-Dahan

H. Election of Directors for 2023

a. Special Nominations to the MERA Board of Directors

Helen Mogford – annual vote – *Lise Loader, Marilyn Nicholas-Dahan and all.*

Peter Cochrane – annual vote – *Timothy Booth, Barbara Appleford and all.*

Barry Russell (interim chair) – annual vote – *Ankaret Dean, Jan Griffiths and all.*

I. Presentation of the Code of Ethics – Louise Ennis

J. Presentation of Ankaret Volunteer Award

K. Other Business

Motion to Adjourn - *Lise Loader, Erica Riley, Elaine Wilson and all.*

Board of Directors Report

Chair: Barry Russell

It's 2023 and Mera is still the little organization that keeps on keeping on. Starting this current term back in March of 2022, we were happy to be coming out of Covid and looking forward to groups reassembling in person and having concerts without masks and distancing. We didn't know this would be such a long process and it continues right up to today. The optimism I spoke of in the Board members last year remains strong. We are a financially healthy organization with a dedicated and growing membership. We are fielding a full slate of activities and have some big plans in the works. Our musical concert slate is full to overflowing thanks to Pete Cochrane and Tom Shoebridge. Group membership is expanding; particularly the potters. New activities are renting the facility and spring and summer workshops and camps are planned. Volunteers are encouraged to contact us with ideas or plans to physically help with these activities.

In the last year we installed new safety railings on the outer walkway and on the stairs to the pottery studio. We applied for a few grants and finally landed a significant grant from the Perth and district community foundation for over \$7500 to replace some windows and improve the insulation and comfort in the building. This project will be starting when the warmer weather finally arrives. There was an improvement in the lighting in Dean Hall to enhance the art shows. There are potential plans to install more specialized lighting for focusing on artworks and concert performers. Installation of more shelves in the pottery studio is ongoing. We are applying for more grants to significantly improve the weaver's porch and possibly replace our furnace with heat pumps, saving significant energy costs and freeing up more space in the basement for the potters. A dream is to install a new entrance to the basement from the outside so stay tuned (do we still use that expression?)

In closing, Mera remains a vibrant and vital part of the community. Our activities are reaching a wider audience and hopefully attracting some of the younger families moving to the area. Your Board is dedicated and motivated to keep this old building hopping every day of the year.Barry

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by: Peter Cochrane

Treasurer's Report for the March 19, 2023 MERA Annual General Meeting

The 2022 Financial Statement and Financial Summary will be available for review at the AGM and on the MERA website. In a general way these documents illustrate MERA's income and expenses during 2022. The restrictions on assembly that had virtually closed MERA down for most of 2020 and 2021 were lifted in 2022 but it was difficult to predict the level of activity that would be resumed. The shortfall for 2021 was over \$5700, so we had some catching up to do in 2022. Consequently, budget projections for 2022 were conservative, with a balanced budget requiring over \$5000 in fundraising.

Happily, for 2022, MERA's income balanced the expenses very closely. This was primarily a function of hard work from some quarters and a bit of good luck, for no special fundraising program took place to cover the shortfall predicted by the budget.

MERA's income for 2022 totaled \$48,261. Income from memberships and donations are essential to MERA's fiscal stability, but many of the activities and programs contribute substantially as well. The following list of significant income sources for 2022 gives an idea of the diversity of sources:

- Memberships 20%
- Donations 18%
- Music Performance 11%
- MERA Gallery 9%
- Christmas Fair 9%
- Children's Art Camp 8%
- Municipal Grant 6%
- Rental 5%
- Wizard's Café 4%
- Speakers Series 3%
- Miscellaneous 6%

It is worth noting that with the exception of the municipal grant, none of these sources are a "sure thing". All of those income streams are a result of significant effort by MERA volunteers and contract staff.

NERA's expenses for 2022 totaled \$47,964, resulting in a surplus of a mere \$297. An approximate break down of expenses for 2022 is as follows:

- Administration Contract 22%
- Maintenance Contract 14%
- Insurance 5%
- Heat, Hydro, supplies 12%
- Office supplies & expenses 3%
- Accounting 1%
- Fees & Licenses 1%
- Artist Fees 29%
- Miscellaneous 6%

A slightly higher-level way of looking at NERA's expenses for 2022 is as follows:

- Contract Staff 36%
- Program Expenses 43%
- Operating Expenses 21%

Compared to 2021, these ratios indicate the renewed level of programming during 2022 consistent with NERA's mandate.

In summary, NERA's financial situation is stable, with sufficient reserves to weather possible misfortunes and to invest modestly in worthwhile projects. If the level of activity at NERA is maintained or expands prudently, we can confidently carry on as a contributing part of our community.

Report prepared by March 10, 2023 by Peter Cochrane, Treasurer

Presentation of Financial Statements for 2022

See [2022 Financial Statements](#)

Programming Committee Report

Submitted By: Timothy Booth

The Program Committee put together a number of exciting programs and live events for the MERA community this year.

Starting in April, Garden Day at MERA was well attended where we exchanged seedlings, connected with old friends and new and learned from community members. In May, we held a Vintage Market Trunk Sale and McDonalds Corners Farmers Market kicked it off. It was a great way to start the summer season at the Schoolhouse!

MERA's pottery group prepared 20 Faery houses for children to decorate at "FaeryFest 2022" in Perth! We won 2nd prize as a vendor!

Over the summer the Art Camp was held in July along with a new entry — Drama Camp led by Alexis Scott. Summer ended with a Campfire. We had a lovely time enjoying songs and stories around the fire - with s'mores of course!

Autumn was busy! MERA's Open House was held at the end of September with displays, demonstrations, great conversations and presentations, members and others learned about all the activities MERA has to offer and how to join in! It was also great to see all the groups of MERA come together.

In October, The MERA Art Circle presented Trees 4 Life — a community-wide celebration of how trees contribute to the web of life, including workshops, tree planting and a spectacular art show. Also in October, families enjoyed a morning working with clay and making beautiful art at the Moms and Tots Paint a Pottery Picture workshop led by Elaine Wilson. MERA hosted a Halloween Activity Day on October 29 where children and adults of all ages enjoyed Halloween themed bead looming, building a scarecrow for MERA, games and decorating and take home a treat.

In November, we held the Annual MERA Christmas Fair, one of MERA's largest fundraising event and a wonder day to connect and find the perfect gift! In December, MERA held the Homeschool Handmade Holiday Craft Sale supporting the homeschool community.

On January 6th, MERA members warmed up to the Lantern Walk and Twelfth Night Party an evening with a lantern walk, sing-a-long and games. The snacks were delicious and the evening was enjoyed by young and old alike.

MERA introduced several new programs this year including the B Naturals Choir, and new sessions of the MERA Speakers Series held on Zoom. Altogether, MERA enjoyed a diverse year of events and activities including weaving, pottery, recorder, book club, fibre arts, quilting, Arts Circle, and Dance.

Special thanks to our committee members: Ankaret Dean, Marilyn Nicholas-Dahan, Elaine Wilson, Tim Booth, Diane Sedore, Alexis Scott and all the volunteers. The program committee is always looking for members and fresh ideas are what make our community thrive.

Stay tuned for programs and events to celebrate MERA's 25th Anniversary in 2024!

Thanks,

Tim B.

Tim also mentioned a few ideas the committee has for upcoming events: Possibility of Makers market, Reinstating dinner nights, Garden cleanup day, Saturday events in the summer – open houses for groups?, Monthly jam session in Dean Hall, Tim' mind/body workshops, Spring Planting workshop, talks and Garden Day, Trunk Sale combined with Makers market – May 24th weekend Café on Saturday mornings?, Program committee will be meeting on Monday night to discuss ideas.

Pottery Studio Report

Submitted by: Jan Griffiths

This past year has seen a real surge of interest in pottery. When the Covid restrictions were lifted many were looking for creative endeavours that would fulfill their need for connection to like minded people. We have welcomed many new potters who are benefitting from the guidance of more experienced potters. We are offering introductory workshops for those folks who are interested in learning how to make pottery on the wheel or slab techniques.

Part of our mandate as well has been to reach out to the community to promote Mera. We joined Ankaret, Erica and Gloria at the Bathurst Fair Grounds for a day of meeting new people to promote Mera while children learned to weave and paint amulets. Elaine and Jan joined the Fairy Fest helping children paint fairy houses and making fairy wands in June at the Crystal Palace in Perth.

For the second time the potters were vendors at the Fall Ag Fair where we encouraged children to paint pottery while we informed the adults about the benefits of joining Mera. The potters participated in the Mera Christmas Fair as well as the Ag Hall Christmas Fair with great success.

Looking forward to this next year of happenings in the Pottery Studio which also includes a great deal of organising, cleaning, maintenance, and many inspirational projects. Both Linda and Quinn have organized all the supplies for making glazes for us all to use. We are currently making shelves and creatively figuring out how to increase storage space while not taking away from the valuable work areas.

After we manage to clean and organize every corner of the studio we plan on painting the walls and the lockers to brighten everything up.

None of this would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of so many people. My grateful heart extends to Dawn, Elaine, Quinn and Linda especially who make everything run tickety boo under the watchful eyes of our fairy god mothers Molly and Lyndal.
Submitted by Jan Griffiths on behalf of the potters

Jan also mentioned Quinn will be offering some workshops on intro to pottery. Jan has a list of about 30 emails from people who have never been to MERA who are interested in doing pottery. Our prices are also extremely low compared to other studios in the area. The studio will be going to Faery Fest

again this year as a way to reach out to the community. Homeschoolers use the pottery studio on a weekly basis. One of the next steps would be to get rid of the oil tank downstairs to create more space.

Art Circle Report

Submitted by: Helen Mogford

The MERA Art Circle is a group of mostly amateur artists who regularly meet at on Friday mornings. In 2022, we met on Zoom for most of the winter and spring. During our time sharing art ideas and ourselves, we had an idea that we wanted to share.

We decided to use our art to bring attention to the climate crisis. To do this, we started brainstorming ideas during Zoom sessions. One Friday, we invited a Carleton Place environmental artist, Adrian Baker, to advise us. This helped us to focus on trees: their significance to ameliorating changes to the climate, their connectivity to each other and their importance to us. We discussed how to advertise, present, encourage and display. Gloria Shoebridge's son created a beautiful poster for us. We wanted to include and encourage Tree Art in the greater community of artists in Lanark, and in schools in Lanark Village. Emails were sent out over time, but unfortunately, there was no response. Meanwhile, Margaret Bruce successfully researched and contacted people about planting trees in a patch behind the Township building. The entire process of planning was interesting and morale boosting for the Art Circle members.

By early summer, we were getting together at the Schoolhouse. In June, we had Neil Carleton from Almonte come and gave us a heart-opening workshop called Tree Inspired Creativity. We had a wonderful time, and learned new ways of connecting art with trees.

During the month of October we displayed our tree art in the schoolhouse. On Oct 2, Ian Tamblyn gave a concert at MERA, mostly about trees. On October 15, we had the Trees4Life Celebration. Bill Barrett and Ed Lawrence gave talks in the morning. There were outside displays by various wood crafts and tree experts, and activities for children and adults. Tree planting happened in the afternoon, with a group of keen diggers, some new to MERA. Unfortunately a

wind and rain storm blew in at about noon, sending lots of people home. Those left in the schoolhouse had a warm and friendly time, with a deep sense of community.

The rest of the year featured casual gatherings at MERA doing our own art. On Fridays, half a dozen people gathered, with a couple of new members joining us.

We are contemplating plans for a 2023 show and have an idea to feature Water this time.

Planning may commence in April. We expect more of the usual inspiration and creativity within our fine bunch of artists.

Submitted by Helen Mogford

March 4, 2023

Music at MERA – Music Committee Report

Submitted by: Peter Cochrane

After two years off restrictions, we were finally able to offer live music performance again at MERA as we had before the pandemic. We started the year off cautiously with 2 concerts in the spring. After noting the positive response to that initial offering, we decided to go for broke and arranged for 8 concerts in the fall.

Our 2022 lineup looked like this:

- April 24, 2022 – Garnet Rogers – Attendance 61
- May 13, 2022 – Martyn Joseph – Attendance 60
- September 11, 2022 – Karen Donnelly & Frederic Lacroix – Attendance 31
- October 2, 2022 – Ian Tamblyn – Attendance 45
- October 14, 2022 – Valdy at Knox Presbyterian Church – Attendance 95
- October 30, 2022 – Al Lerman – Attendance 32
- November 13, 2022 – Wendell Ferguson & Katherine Wheatley – Attendance 42
- November 20, 2022 – Neville Wells, Frank Koller & Maureen Young – Attendance 42
- November 27, 2022 – The Pairs – Attendance 48
- December 11, 2022 – Paul Marleyn & Frederic Lacroix – Attendance 61

The musical styles ranged across blues, country, folk, classical and musical standup. Whether the audience was large or small, the performances were all delightful and the audience most appreciative.

Thanks to the generosity of 2 anonymous donors, we have been able to purchase some additional sound equipment that will improve the experience for the musicians and the audience. We are most grateful for these targeted donations.

The 2023 Music at MERA spring series has spread into winter and summer as well. By the time this report is presented two performances will have already taken place. The “spring” lineup looks like this:

- February 26 – Mia Kelly and Basset
- March 12 – Jason Fowler and Melanie Conly
- April 23 – Boreal
- April 30 – The Alireza Tarviji String Quartet
- May 14 – Melwood Cutlery and the Long Sault Trio
- May 28 – Japhy Sullivan
- June 25 – Roxy Swan and Peter Brown

This series will cover multiple musical styles: classical, show tunes, blues, old folk, new folk, local folk. A few of these offerings are something that we have not tried before, and we will be interested to see the level of interest. You can always find information about upcoming concerts on the home page of the MERA website. Plans for concerts in the fall of 2023 are already in the works.

A special thank you goes out to Louise Ennis and Tim Booth who have done such an excellent job running the Wizard's Café efficiently and deliciously.

The Music at MERA committee is comprised of Tom Shoebridge, Tim Booth and Peter Cochrane.

Report prepared March 10, 2023 by Peter Cochrane

Tim added that Peter and Tom are doing such a great job with programming. Tom would like to thank Gloria for providing lunch!

Heritage Weavers**Submitted by: Erica Riley**

We have 9 members, 8 of whom are present and active most Thursdays when the studio is a hive of activity again with projects in progress on some or all of our seven looms. We sold one of our smaller 27" looms and replaced it with an 8-shaft loom which had been donated to Lise Loader for the use of our group. We learned how to warp this new-to-us loom and are currently weaving beautiful reverse twill cushion covers on it. During the year we completed several weaving projects: crayola-design cotton tea towels, 100% wool blankets, overshot cushion covers, wool rugs (34" x 56"), rep weave placemats. We also wove 11 Christmas tea towels which were sold at the Christmas Fair in November and 100% of the proceeds (\$275) donated to MERA, as we have done in past years. We were happy to have a spot again at the Christmas Fair to offer for sale many of the items we as individuals have woven, and to pass on the required percentage of sales to MERA. In September, 2022 a couple of our weavers attended the Lanark County Harvest Festival in Beckwith Park, along with some Potters and members of the Arts Circle, to promote MERA and to highlight all the activities it has to offer. We displayed a few samples of our weaving and offered a hands-on weaving experience on one of our table looms to interested participants. This was very popular with children in particular. We were also present at the McDonalds Corners Fair at the end of September to promote MERA, with a small display of our weaving. We are very happy to be part of MERA and grateful for the opportunity it gives us to learn from each other and to share the friendship of our group. Submitted by Erica Riley on behalf of the Weavers

Building Committee

Submitted by David Wilson

A lot of things have been done here at MERA over the last year to make it better. Outside there are three new picnic tables and a structure to sit on and under, a new railing was installed, also still keep up outside maintenance as well. The building is being cleaned once a week and there are plans to install new lights in Dean Hall for the monthly art shows. A new window was installed in the MERA room and a new railing has been installed in the pottery studio. The building committee is always coming up with new ideas to make MERA a better place.

Fundraising Committee Report

Submitted by: Louise Ennis

Over the past year, the Fundraising Committee looked at a number of grant opportunities for upgrades to the MERA Schoolhouse infrastructure. We applied for two grants – Commonweal Leaf and the Perth and District Community Foundation (PCDF). While we received great online support from the MERA community on the first, we did not get that one. However, we did use information from the LEAF grant and successfully applied for the PCDF grant which will allow us to upgrade windows and insulation in Dean Hall and the Weavers' Studio. We are currently looking at the Trillium Infrastructure grant with a view to improving our heating and energy requirements (this grant process starts in July).

We are grateful to the Perth and District Community Foundation for their generous grant. As well, we applied for a grant for Covid Recovery from Trillium in December and a similar grant at the Federal level. Both are related to organization and communications improvements (interactive web site, centralizing information and improving membership, program delivery and registration related communications). We anticipate hearing about both in early May.

In February, based on much feedback and a need to be consistent in our grant applications, we worked with the Communications Committee to develop a user guide to grant applications available to members making applications on behalf of MERA. We also started a list of granting organizations and potential sponsors to approach for future projects. We welcome any suggestions for grant and sponsorship opportunities.

Special thanks to our committee members, Board and valued advisors: Tom Shoebridge, Louise Ennis, Barry Russell, Helen Mogford, Alexis Scott, Pete Cochrane and Wayne Stride.

The Fundraising Committee looks forward to working in 2023-24 on new opportunities and welcomes members and ideas.

Fibre Arts Group Report

Submitted by: Marilyn Nicholas-Dahan

The MERA Fibre Arts Group started meeting in autumn 2022 after a hiatus due to Covid restrictions. The group met weekly on Tuesdays with up to eight people helping one another to learn new techniques and skills pertaining to fiber arts. Fiber arts workshops were held each week and generally ran in calibration by group members. We also had the opportunity to learn basketry taught by Ankaret Dean.

This group was offered free of charge and the community showed great interest. Participants learned to use fibers, such as wool, paper, grape vines and a variety of fabrics, in arts such as basket making, felting, batiking and book binding. In the fall, we made items to donate to the MERA Christmas Sale.

Fibre Arts gatherings continued until winter conditions seemed to slow down attendance, so we, as a group decided to pause until spring but regular members enthusiastically voted to renew gatherings in the milder weather and we hope to generate the interest of new members at that time as well. There were some requests and discussions around moving the weekly gatherings to Thursday as the previous fiber arts group used to meet on that day and the weavers are in-house on that day as well. We will soon continue this discussion and move forward with a weekly gathering to learn new fiber arts techniques together.

MERA's Needle Pushers (Quilters)

No report, Quilters still meet regularly at the Schoolhouse

Jean Dunning mentioned that there is a Book Club that meets every month, and the group is open to new members. They are all a lovely group of people and sometimes there are cookies.

Board Terms 2022

Name	Current Position	Started on Board	End of Term and notes
Barry Russell	Chair	2017	2023 now in 2 nd
PJ Wilson	Vice Chair	2018	2024 now in 2 nd term
Helen Mogford	Secretary	2014	2022 yearly vote
Peter Cochrane	Treasurer	2014	2022 yearly vote
Elaine Wilson	Director	2020	2023 first term
Jan Griffiths	Director	2021	2024 first term
Timothy Booth	Director	2022	2025 first term
Louise Ennis	Director	2022	2025 first term

Nominations Committee:

Annual vote needed for: Helen Mogford (secretary), Peter Cochrane (treasurer) (as per Bylaw 4.10(b))

This year we say goodbye to Elaine Wilson. Thank you for serving a cheerful term on the board and for your major contributions to pottery, program committee and events and MERA.

There were no new nominations to the board this year.

Presentation of the Code of Ethics

See Code of Ethics

Ankaret Dean Volunteer Award

The Ankaret Dean Volunteer Award is awarded to MERA members who have made exceptional contributions to MERA over time, not just the current year, and in a way that benefits the mass of MERA, not just one group.

Nominations can be made by an individual or as a group (please list all people making the nomination). This year's nominees are:

2022 Ankaret Volunteer Award Nomination

Award Nominee's Name: Wayne Stryde

Exceptional Contribution Description & details:

Wayne put in a cheerful, well spoken 6 years on the Board. He wrote grant proposals whenever they were noticed. His first love is the Art Show series in Dean Hall. He has found artists, helped them present their work, assisted with the Meet the Artist events, and helped take down the shows. This series is hugely important to MERA, and makes Dean Hall look wonderful.

Your Name(s): Helen Mogford, Barry Russell

Date: March 7, 2023

All nominations were presented to the MERA Board of Directors at the meeting on March 7th and they decided Wayne Stryde would be the recipient of this year's award. Many thanks to Barry Russell and Tim Booth for donating items from their woodshop as the prize.

Other Business

David got the wrong type of paper towel – and will try not to get that kind again.

Jean Dunning loves the idea of jam sessions on Saturdays.

Peter mentioned that Saturday cafes are really hard on the people running it. Erica suggested a rotation of people doing it.

Jan suggested that she has a whole tote of musical instruments for children. Or Saturday mornings for pottery.

Motion to Adjourn

Approved By: _____

Written By: Alexis Scott

March 19, 2023