

# Synergy

Volume 3; Issue 2; Winter 2011

*Inspiring unity, joy and opportunity through the arts*

*The newsletter of Lake of the Woods Arts Collective*

## New LOWAC board takes the reins

*By Irene McCuaig, co-chair*

With two meetings under its belt, the new LOWAC board sees exciting events on the horizon for the arts community in Kenora.

But before describing those though, we would like to extend a huge 'thank-you, well-done, kudos to you' to the previous board members: Kim Kahoot, LeeAnn Hawkins and Holly Friesen for their commitment to the launching of our Arts Collective. I doubt that anyone looking in from the outside could appreciate the amount of time, energy and enthusiasm that the past board has given to the task of bringing arts to the foreground in Kenora. They have created an organization that, in a few short years, has garnered community recognition and respect. A standing ovation to you!

Continuing their work is the new LOWAC board: the team of Esme Boone and Irene McCuaig as co-chairs; Jeannine DeGagne as treasurer, whose task it is to make sure our paper trail supports our community image (who says artists can't be accountants?); Susan Campbell as secretary (special thanks to Holly for filling in for Susan when asked); Patrick Lessard as membership coordinator, a task that I would find daunting but that Patrick does incredibly well; Cory McCrindle as publicity liaison, a job that also includes standing on a step-ladder outside Tilley's...thanks, Cory; Tara

Douglas-Letwiniuk who brings a solid business background to the board which we sooooo appreciate; David Caissy and Andrew Ross who are our music reps and always have exciting news from the vibrant music scene in our city; Laurie Dufresne and Betty Wires who represent visual artists, a group that has only gained enthusiasm since the inception of LOWAC; Elsie Neufeld as writer rep and Synergy creator and membership card maker and idea monger extraordinaire. What a team! Enthusiasm runs high and takes visual form in the following past and future events:

Wordfest Fall 2010: See Page 6.

Festival of Trees entry: See Page 3.

Coney Island Music Festival: July 24, 2011, teaming with Ferg Devins of Coors/Molson. Plans are underway to bring this exciting event to Kenora again this summer for the third year!

Winter Carnival: With the board's support, our visual artists are undertaking the organization of the snow sculpture competition in the 2011 revived Winter Carnival. Think 3D and start planning!

Incorporation: the Board is studying the pros and cons of incorporating with a pending presentation to the board from people with experience in this field.

Juried art show: in the planning stages.

Fringe festival: an idea that's out there in nebulous form and might condense into solid format.

LOWCA partnership: the Board has been working, as a support group, with LOWCA (Lake of the Woods Centre for the Arts Charitable Organization). We are considering applying for a Compass grant, with LOWCA, to bring a mentor to the community to help consolidate the Arts Centre vision.

Studio Tour and 2X2: our visual artists have both these events well in hand. The Studio Tour will be held July 15-17 and the 2X2, an outdoor exhibit of artwork, will start June 27 and end July 24.

And, of course, a major thanks to the Community Arts Hub, whose space is so inspiring for our meetings. We appreciate your support!

Kenora has always been blessed with an active and enthusiastic arts community and never more so than the present time. Music, drama, art, dance, writing—it's everywhere!

Someone once told me that chairing an enthusiastic board is like trying to harness wild horses. If we can get all that energy moving in one direction, there is no end to what we can do!

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*Photo by Cory McCrindle*

# Synergy

is the newsletter of the Lake of the Woods Arts Collective (LOWAC).

Please send submissions to Elsie Neufeld by email at [eneufeld@kmts.ca](mailto:eneufeld@kmts.ca). For more information either email, or phone her at 548-8455.

*Synergy* reserves the right to edit articles for length, grammar, etc.

**Synergy: Increased effectiveness, achievement, etc., produced by combined action, co-operation, etc.**

## LOWAC Executive

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## Editor's Note

# Editor Elsie elucidates (maybe)

That headline is one sad attempt at writing catchy headlines. One of my New Year's resolutions is to write better headlines. I have nowhere to go but up having set the bar so low.

New goals, like improving headlines, and old goals, like getting more fit, are renewed at this time of year. A new year is a new beginning; it holds promise that this year the goal will be achieved.

When I start a new issue of *Synergy*, it is just like a new year. It's a time for renewed commitment to create a great little arts newsletter, to fill the pages with arts news, events, accomplishments, ambitions, to involve all forms of art. (Sometimes it morphs into glossy magazine...See page 5 re daydreaming.)

This year it is going to be harder than

ever to make *Synergy* the best it can be, because I've lost my most prolific contributor, Kim Kahoot. Kim is still involved with LOWAC as past co-chair, but a new venture will eat up the time she spent previously writing for *Synergy*. I thank her for her commitment to *Synergy*, and wish her success in her new adventure, but I am going to miss her so much.

Always, the hardest part of producing a newsletter is gathering the news, photos and coming events. It is so frustrating for me, because I know it's out there I just don't know how to get it in here.

As well as better headlines, my goal is to find and nurture contributors in all art genres. If you are interested in contributing, please contact me: Elsie Neufeld at [eneufeld523@gmail.com](mailto:eneufeld523@gmail.com).

## Visual Arts Update

# Snow sculpting added to the mix

By Betty Wires, Visual Arts Co-chair

Since the new LOWAC executive started its mandate, three Visual Arts Committee meetings have been held - November, December & January. The visual arts group meets the first Tuesday each month at 7 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Everyone welcome.

Plans for 2011 include new events and established but expanding events.

### Upcoming events

New for us this year, LOWAC is sponsoring the Snow Sculpture competition as part of Kenora Carnival Blast from the Past, March 4, 5 and 6.

There are two categories: General (any team of 4 or less members) and School (5 students & one teacher). Anyone interested in volunteering for this event,

please contact Laurie Defresene at [lauried@kmts.ca](mailto:lauried@kmts.ca).

Established but expanding is the 2011 Studio Tour. The Studio Tour will be expanding this year from two days to three days, July 15, 16 and 17.

Any artists interested in participating in the 2011 Studio Tour, please contact Irene McCuaig at [mccuair@kmts.ca](mailto:mccuair@kmts.ca) by mid January. Watch for further details on the tour.

2011 2x2 Exhibit will take place June 27 - July 24. This year's theme is *Captured Moments* which will no doubt inspire artists in many different directions. Planning for the 2011 exhibit has started.

Anyone interested in being part of this event, as a volunteer or an exhibitor, please contact Betty Wires at [betty.wires@gmail.com](mailto:betty.wires@gmail.com).

# Studio IX reshapes itself

By Marielle Benson

An end has come to Studio IX in the space it has occupied for over 25 years. We, the various artists who used this space, are grateful to the landlords that sponsored us by allowing us to remain there through all these years and also allowed us to have Studio Tours for two summers.

We have resolved to maintain our hope in the creative spirit and have decided to meet several evenings a month to accommodate working artists. We are fortunate to have been welcomed to the New Horizons Seniors Centre for these evenings and are calling it *Studio IX and Friends*.

We welcome you to join us for an art

visit to sketch, draw, paint, etc. The cost is \$1 with New Horizons Seniors Centre membership or \$2 without a membership.

### Creative Retirement — Art for Fun

This is another opportunity to gather for art projects. Sponsored by New Horizons Senior Centre, we gather in the multipurpose room (old daycare) at the Rec Centre Wednesdays 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Bring your own projects — arts or crafts. This is an opportunity to experiment, practice techniques, share information and more. Cost is \$1 per session with a New Horizon's Senior Centre membership (\$15) or \$2 without a senior centre membership. For more information on these, call Marielle Benson, at 468-5629

## Festival of Trees

# An opportunity to shine and share

By LeeAnn Hawkins

Do you remember as a child the wonder and excitement you felt when the Christmas tree went up? The glitter and shine, the balls and the candy canes — especially the candy canes! You would pour your heart into putting those precious ornaments just so, and then place the next one right beside it, and the next, and the next until the branch would be weighed down, blanketing the one underneath it.

You would stand back and admire your wonderful handiwork, thinking — no, knowing—the tree, *your* tree, was the most beautiful one in the whole, wide world; your mother handing you a hot chocolate loaded with marshmallows, a snowdrift upon a chocolate river...mmmm.

She'd smile and gently remind you that the shiny baubles could be placed a little higher or a little lower than on the heavily decorated few branches.

Then out would come those glue and glitter smothered paper ornaments that you spent hours making, glitter shining from all the cracks and crevices in the home, placed so lovingly on the tree, like they were the Mona Lisas of tree trimming.

Finally, Mom would carefully unwrap the angel, the one handed down for generations, a bit tattered around the edges but every bit as precious as the day it was first placed on the tree.

Handing it to Dad whose job it was to place that very same angel high upon the tiptop of the tree, a witness to the joy and wonderment of children as they first open their eyes and see the treats and treasures awaiting them Christmas morn.

It sounds like a Norman Rockwell painting. Maybe, but the atmosphere at the Lake of the Woods Museum's tree decorating morning was not far off. As tree after tree was decorated, twenty five in all, a sense of wonderment was

felt by one and all. The miracle of several businesses, schools, and organizations coming together to raise money for the benefit of the whole community.

It was the time of year when the Kenora and Lake of the Woods Regional Community Foundation was hosting its annual Festival of Trees, hoping to auction off all the decorated trees, wreaths, and gingerbread houses and raise funds in order to give back to the community.

Christmas carols quietly lent to the atmosphere as small groups of people were busily trimming their trees in all manner of themes. Shop local, Frosty Morning, The Grinch—all were represented by the variety of people there.

By variety, I mean everyone from the O.P.P. and Rotary, to Valleyview School and Safeway, from Standard Insurance and Image One to LOWAC and Scotty's Auto Service. I mention the last two because I had the pleasure of working on both those trees. From the time I was told the theme of this year, *Sounds of the Season*, I was wondering what to do.

I like to think a bit out of the box and see

what happens. This year for the Scotty's tree, I wanted to do a *Crisp Winter's Garden*, a tree that would give a feeling of peace and tranquility, as you see it looking out the window from a cozy fireplaced living room sipping hot chocolate and eggnogs. It had to be lush and natural while still retaining the shine and glitter of Christmas. I started shopping for the birds, baubles, feathers, flowers and fur that would eventually adorn the tree, then started to create what was also needed. In the end I had too many decorations and enjoyed putting them all on anyway. And it paid off, as Scotty's tree won the People's Choice Award and brought in the winning bid of \$1400 for the evening. The second highest bid for the night was \$925, the tree created by LOWAC. Anyone who wanted to contribute to the tree was asked to make decorations in a shade of white.

Jeannine Degagne spearheaded a small group of LOWAC artists who had decided on an all white tree, *Serenitree*. We met four times at Esme Boone's, who had graciously opened her home to us,

and we created and created and created. Sue Campbell made a wonderful stained glass star for the topper, Betty Wires created some lovely fused glass icicles, and Kim Kahoot, doing her usual magic, created some jeweled fiber ornaments. Many people contributed to the tree and many more decorated the tree. A good time was had by all.

At the end of the evening, the community foundation found itself with a bit of money to invest, and Kenora had the pleasure of visiting the museum and seeing the wonder in the eyes of the little ones who visited, recapturing the feeling of Christmas' past. I realize by the time many of you read this article we will be in the midst of a January freeze

I hope that this melts your hearts a bit and gives you a few happy memories.



Jeannine Degagne led a team of LOWAC artists in decorating the LOWAC tree for the LOW Community Foundation's Festival of Trees. The tree, titled *Serenitree*, had an all white theme and raised \$925 for the foundation.

Photo by Cory McCrindle

# Meet the new LOWAC board

## Esmé Boone: Co-chair

Esmé studied art for three years full time at the National Art School in Sydney and Newcastle, Australia, before coming to Canada in 1970. Once in this country, she completed an honours degree in Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba, majoring in painting with second major in photography.

She planned and coordinated tourist development of a Provincial Heritage Park in Manitoba [Old Pinawa].

Esmé works mainly with acrylics on canvas. Her work, often quite large, includes realistically rendered figures in a mystical, dream-like, often musical milieux. While appearing illustrative, her paintings are, in fact, metaphors for deeply personal issues.

She recently won the Grand Prize and an honourable mention in the Dryden Miniature Art Show.

Esmé's other passion is as music, especially when it comes to playing the Celtic harp and accompanying herself singing Celtic and Gaelic songs.

She also runs harp-making workshops in which tiny lap harps are made. These workshops combine music and art, as the participants paint their own designs on the harp. "That way, she jokes, they get an art lesson as well as a harp!"

Esmé is also a Nurse Practitioner, but has almost retired from this now.



## Irene McQuaig: Co-chair

Irene has created artwork since childhood and had her first one-person show at Sunset Gallery in 2006.

After graduating high school, she took teacher-training in Thunder Bay, then went on to get a BA in English and Psychology. She taught school for eight years before realizing she would rather study art. There followed a number of years of teaching part-time and studying art part-time at Cambrian College in Sudbury and the Ontario College of Art in Toronto.

For a number of years, Irene worked as a copywriter/designer in Toronto.

When the attraction of Northwestern Ontario called her home, Irene continued to share her interest in art by offering evening classes in drawing and watercolour/acrylic painting.

In 1997, Irene won a national competition sponsored by the Canadian Legion for her poster depicting the "Year of the Older Person".

Irene continues to study art and take courses. She prefers to combine painting with travel and has studied art during vacation trips to Provence, France; Oregon, USA, Yorkshire, England and Tuscany, Italy.

Between 2006 and 2010, Irene wrote and taught an introductory art appreciation course offered on-line through Confederation College in Thunder Bay.

She has a strong interest in helping Kenora make a smooth transition from existence as an ex-mill town to its development as a thriving centre for the arts. As a retired teacher, she plans on devoting a great deal of her time in the next few years to the development of the arts in Kenora.

Irene has served, in various capacities, on several local volunteer Boards: Multicultural Association of Kenora and District, Child Development Centre, Knox Church Board of Elders, Northwest Community Legal Clinic and Lake of the Woods Arts Collective. She brings previous Board experience, fundraising knowledge, a willingness to do the grunt work, and a deep love of our community to the position of LOWAC co-chair.



## Jeannine Degagne: Treasurer

I am a fashion designer who has always been fascinated with textiles, textures and their relationship with the female form. I design, manufacture and modify garments within the comfort of my home-based studio.

One of my most gratifying projects was breathing new life into a treasured men's suit. The assignment was to redesign a three piece men's suit into a tailored women's three piece skirt suit. The customer wanted to preserve her husband's first suit.

I became involved with LOWAC to share my skills and knowledge, and encourage others in the community to explore their talents and develop or learn a new skill. I would like to see Kenora promote "Made in Canada." We have talented Canadian artists and artisans who need our representation and support.



## Music Co-chairs



David Caissy



Andrew Ross

## Susan Campbell: Secretary

I don't consider myself an artist although I've been an avid supporter of Canadian artists for years. My home is chock-full of an eclectic collection of art pieces that bring me joy each and every day.

When I relocated to Kenora last winter I discovered this vibrant arts community that I just knew I wanted to be a part of. (Thank you Kris Goad for welcoming me so.) I have joined LOWAC and its board to help expand the public's awareness and support of the artists in the region.

The achievement I am most proud of in life is to have opened my home and my heart to my two nieces and my foster children.



## Betty Wires: Visual Arts Co-chair



My art is stained glass, and I dabble in all things glass - fused glass, mosaics, traditional glass panels and lamps. I like working with glass because it challenges me to think about design elements as well as technical processes.

The art piece I'm most proud of is "Alice" - it is a mosaic torso piece that I made for the Forms of Hope cancer research fundraiser a few years ago. "Alice" was in honour of my mother who died of cancer at age 56. She would

## Patrick Lessard: Membership Chair

I enjoy taking pictures of nature and landscapes. My photography led me to Harbourfest. Not only did I want to enjoy the festival, I wanted to bring more to it. This helped open my eyes to other things happening in the city.

LOWAC was one thing that really drew my attention, and I wanted to know how I could get more involved. I'm membership coordinator, and have no regrets at all. It has been two years now and there is still a lot to do, but I'm enjoying doing the work and meeting creative

people. I have been proud of it. It is not necessarily my best or most original glass work but it was very personal and felt good to contribute in a small way to a good cause.

I joined LOWAC because I like the idea of making art part of our community as well as providing artists the opportunity to profile their work. LOWAC has done this and I believe I can contribute and build on this goal. I also like that LOWAC is a grassroots/members based organization. Finally, I was asked to be involved and it was the right time for me to do so.

I would like to see a centre for the arts in Kenora - somewhere to call home and where we can showcase the talent that exist in our community as well as to attract more cultural events to the community.

*Laurie Dufresne shares the VA chair with Betty.*



people. Wanting a more vibrant arts city, I am now also involved in the Centre for the Arts. Our goal is to create a building in Kenora which will house and promote all arts, and a venue for an audience to enjoy them.

## Kim Kahoot: Past Co-chair

I was LOWAC co-chair for two years with LeeAnn Hawkins, the first two years of LOWAC. A multi-media visual artist, I work mostly in textiles, collage and acrylics. I have exhibited and sold my work locally, and across Canada.

I am also a writer, teacher, community volunteer, and single parent of three wonderful teens.

I believe that wisdom can be found in the words of our youth, if we would only listen.... and, at the other end of the spectrum, too often we ignore the gifts that our community elders offer.

I co-coordinated 'Forms of Hope', an exhibit and silent auction which



raised \$25,000 for the Oncology department.

Art is a medium for expression, communication, and connection. It transcends race, age, and economics. It draws people together. It can heal the rifts within our own lives, our community, and create a healthy, thriving environment in Kenora.

## Elsie Neufeld: Newsletter Editor

I'm a freelance non-fiction writer with several years of experience as a newspaper reporter/photographer. At first I was an information junkie and chronic daydreamer who wrote to justify her compulsions, rather than a writer.

At some point, I discovered creative non-fiction, a form where writers can be literary and journalistic simultaneously. I started looking more closely at the art of writing.

While working in Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts presented me an award for performing arts writing. That achievement was possible because the



small city where I lived had a dynamic arts community.

Everybody benefits when the arts thrive.

LOWAC is fostering the arts in Kenora. More and more artists realize what is possible. This year I was involved in the first Kenora writers festival. The future is exciting. I love being part of LOWAC

I have a weakness for its newsletter, Synergy.

## Tara Douglas-Letwiniuk: Vice-chair

I consider myself an artist in the making. Trained in the law, I only started to explore my creative side in the last few years. I dabble in and play with visual arts, glass and design. I became involved with LOWAC because I believe it is the people, and what they put their energies into, that defines the heart of a community. I was inspired and proud of the founders of LOWAC and wanted to contribute to their efforts in some way. I dream of Kenora becoming a siren for artists, calling people from all over to be inspired by the wild beauty, history and eclectic culture of our area.

## Cory McCrindle: Publicity

Photography has always been my hobby. My partner Brenda Polius and I have our own photography business, Northern Exposures.

This is my second term with LOWAC.

Being a member of LOWAC has introduced me to enthusiastic, energetic people who truly care about this community and the arts in it. I believe in LOWAC's aim to bring local artists together and turn Kenora into an arts destination. I believe we can help positively impact and diversify the local economy.

I feel great about not only the vast amount of talent we have here locally, but also the energy and power that comes along with participating in group efforts.

# The art of Christmas giving

By LeeAnn Hawkins

Christmas is a time of sharing and giving to those who are less fortunate and may otherwise not have any Christmas presents.

Keeping those people in mind, LOWAC's visual artists decided to give back to the Kenora, the community that supports our art throughout the year.

In December we decided to follow our mandate of spreading art in the community by providing eight lucky children with art kits — eight kits with identical contents that would give the children an opportunity to experiment with different mediums.

Each art tub included acrylic paints,

watercolour paints, charcoal pencils and sketch pads, self hardening clay, canvases, brushes, glues and scissors among other things; all neatly placed inside a bright green festive tub, wrapped in clear poly with a big bow on top.

After making up the kits, I thought about the joy in the children's eyes as the kits are opened Christmas morning and was struck by the thought that it would be Christmas every day for these eight special children. Smile. You were part of creating that joy.

LOWAC is proud to have given eight children a special Christmas wish this past holiday season.

Throughout the New Year, laugh, love, be safe and creative.

## KDFA entry deadline, Feb. 1

The KDFA Syllabus will be available online at [www.kdfa.ca](http://www.kdfa.ca) as well as in schools and libraries. Events at the festival include an exhibit of visual art, as well as performances in the classes of vocal, piano and other instruments, choral music and dramatic arts.

The entry deadline for all categories is February 1.

The Visual Arts portion this year will include two and three dimensional works of art exhibited at the Lake of the Woods Museum from April 5 to 30.

Verbal adjudication sessions will take place on Saturday, April 9

Workshop sessions with the adjudicator/artist on Sunday, April 10. Workshops will be available based on demand.

Please contact the visual arts coordinator for more information on the workshops being offered this year at [hollyannfriesen@me.com](mailto:hollyannfriesen@me.com) or 548-2098.

The adjudicator and workshop instructor will be Rhian Brynjolson (a teacher, visual artist and award winning illustrator of children's books).

The Adjudicator Choices and the People's Choice will be awarded at the Hi-Lites concert on April 30.

## Writers' festival hits the mark

By Elsie Neufeld, *Literary Arts*

"Very well organized. A very impressive first."

"Great relaxed atmosphere, great variety."

Exhibitors and attendees were impressed with the first ever writers' festival in Kenora, Wordfest Fall 2010, Oct 22 & 23.

Approximately 70 attended the main events on Saturday, Oct. 23, with approximately 20 at each of the keynote speakers, Friday (Don Marks) and Saturday (Jake MacDonald) nights. Attendees came from as far away as Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout.

Seventeen authors and columnists

participated, nine of whom were local writers. The Saturday events consisted of 14 sessions, including panel discussions, readings, and workshops. Cultural organizations and publishers attended as well.

Financial contributions from LOWAC, LOWBIC, Elizabeth Campbell Books, The Bookstore, KMTS, LOWCA, Outdoor Canada and others made Wordfest possible.

Plans for the 2011 writers' festival, Words on the Water (WOW), are already underway. Anyone willing to volunteer some time towards WOW or interested in belonging to the writers' group, please contact me at [eneufeld523@gmail.com](mailto:eneufeld523@gmail.com)



Local author, Gloria Alcock, read from her book, *Nurse at the Top of the World*, at Wordfest Fall 2010, and answered questions from the audience.

Photo by Cory McCrindle

## Arts Events

### Feb. 13 — Sunday Smiles Series

Sunday Smiles Family Entertainment Series line-up:

Feb 13 — *Splash'n Boots – Wiggle, Jump and Music Jam!*

April 24 — *Axis Theatre – King Arthur*

All performances are held at 2 p.m. at Lakewood School, located at 240 Lakeview Drive. Venue is wheelchair accessible. All children must be accompanied by an adult. All performances can be enjoyed by the whole family. Children 3 and under get in FREE! Passports \$20 each (\$5 per show). Door Tickets: Adults \$10 Children \$7. Doors open at 1:30. Find us on Facebook! Or for more information contact: Suzanne Langlois 468-8570, Debbie Lockhart 548-2772, or Molly Stouffer 468-5871.

### Feb. 9 – TBSO

Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra will return for another concert this year. This is the 50th anniversary season for the Juno nominated orchestra. It is always a big hit in Kenora. Concert starts at 7:30 p.m. at Knox United Church. Tickets \$20. Tickets available at Johnson's, HoJoe Coffee & Books, The Blue Heron and Sunset Gallery. For more information and the complete season schedule visit our web site [www.lowc.ca](http://www.lowc.ca)

### Feb. 27 – MTC

The popular Manitoba Theatre Center will present *Wingfield On Ice* by Dan Needles. As the first frosts come to Persephone Township, Walt and Maggie Wingfield are all set to welcome new life to the farm. She's expecting and he's nesting. But Walt is alarmed about the old feuds that divide the neighbours and disturb the tranquility of the community. His attempts to mend other people's fences meet with a resistance as stiff and cold as the weather itself. And the biggest challenge to all of them is looming on the horizon. Concert starts at 7:30 p.m. at Lakewood School. Tickets \$25. Tickets (see TBSO above). For more information and the complete season schedule visit [www.lowc.ca](http://www.lowc.ca).

To see other arts events, go to our website — [www.lowac.ca](http://www.lowac.ca)