

Algonquin Arts Council's plans for the coming year

BY MICHAEL RILEY Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

While Tudor and Cashel Township council declined to provide a financial donation to the Algonquin Arts Council at their Jan. 11 meeting, Kim Crawford, the treasurer with the AAC reveals that they sent out letters to six other municipalities in Hastings County regarding donations and are waiting to hear back. Crawford also gives Bancroft This Week an update on the AAC's activities going into 2022. Crawford says that they send out these "ask" letters every year asking for donations to several municipalities. This year there were seven, including Tudor and Cashel Township. The others were Hastings Highlands, Bancroft, Wollaston, Faraday, Carlow Mayo and Limerick. Crawford says that most years they get a positive response from several of the townships, depending on their budgets and they are pleased to get the support. She says their contributions are especially important to the AAC as a means of demonstrating municipal support, a requirement in many provincial and federal grant applications. She says that they have gotten acknowledgement of receipt from the townships but no further information yet. The AAC is in the process of re-examining its structure, mission and long-term goals, according to Crawford. "We have set a date for a facilitated visioning session to discuss our future and we are excited by the prospect of change," she says. Crawford says that date for this facilitated visioning session will be Feb. 9. Back in October, 1978, the AAC was established when residents from Bancroft and the surrounding area saw the need for more community arts events. Even from the early years, the AAC had an Adult Concert Series, children and school programs, art exhibits and a newsletter. According to their website, the AAC's objectives are; to coordinate and foster cultural activities in North Hastings and surrounding area, to spur community involvement for all ages in these programs especially the handicapped, to have workshops and seminars where local and regional groups can liaise with professionals and to promote productions in the realm of theatre, music and dance, visual arts and crafts for presentation to the community they serve. Crawford says that in terms of grant funding, the AAC is looking at the Hydro One Community Fund at the moment and they'll continue to monitor other opportunities as they come along. The Hydro One Energizing Life Community Fund provides support to provincial organizations and communities by funding projects that focus on the physical, psychological and emotional safety of Ontarians. The grant is worth \$25,000. "In the past, we have been successful with Ontario Arts Council grants and Trillium grants for specific projects. We don't have a fundraising target or any specific projects on the go at the moment," she says. Crawford says that many of the AAC's member groups are hoping to resume regular programming this year. She says that the Mineral Capital Concerts in Millennium Park have been on hold for two years and are hoping to restart this summer. The Bancroft Arts and Crafts Guild summer and Christmas shows and the North Hastings Community Choir Christmas and spring concerts were also on hold. She says that the choir was able to start rehearsing again in person prior to this past set of restrictions and they produced a virtual Christmas concert this past December. They are hoping to start gathering again soon and are looking forward to preparing their spring concert. A Place for the Arts also pivoted to deal with the COVID-19 restrictions and enhanced their online presence and embraced doing online sales. When APFTA was allowed to be open, Crawford says that they had brisk sales as she felt that people were embracing shopping locally. "We are also excited by the changes happening at the Village Playhouse, and look forward to supporting the Tweed Theatre Company in any way we can," she says. "It will be wonderful to have live theatre and other events at the Playhouse again."