

President's Annual Report 2017-18

This theatre company continues to amaze me with its accomplishments year after year. We strive for the highest artistic levels and we are able to continually improve our facilities and technical expertise. Which is not to say we don't have challenges. More about that later.

For the past eight or ten years the efforts of the Shuswap Society for Arts and Culture (SSAC) to construct a large performing arts centre has made it difficult to make good decisions about how to manage our current building and equipment. The original plan was that this centre would be an affordable home for Shuswap Theatre and that we would sell our own assets to contribute to the new building.

We commend the tenacity of the SSAC members in pursuing this dream for about a decade. However, after a number of years of deferring maintenance and improvements on our own building, our board decided to proceed as if we were going to be here for some time to come. This decision has made possible the replacement of our seats (this year's big achievement), replacement and enhancement of our lighting control system, redecorating of the lobby and washroom area (with new lighting still to come) and a plan to replace the aging, increasingly uneven stage floor.

We have chosen to operate under the assumption we will be in this building for some time to come. (Which isn't so bad – many visiting performers tell us what a wonderful facility it is.) This year's annual meeting will provide an opportunity for you our members to decide whether to support this decision and to better define our relationship with a possible performing arts centre.

I will not describe in detail all our other accomplishments as you can read about them in the reports that follow, but it's probably worth summarizing them in point form so you can see all in one place what we have been doing.

Tech

- Created the position of House Technical Director and appointed Jim Clayton to the position with a modest honorarium.
- Replaced one of our aging dimmer packs, which was malfunctioning, with three new ones giving us 48 channels of control compared to 24. While this does not substantially increase the actual number of instruments we can use, it gives us much finer control.
- Received the gift of a brand new electronic lighting console which takes up much less space and will allow us to expand into LED lighting when we're ready.
- Installed aisle lighting (thanks to Doug Kyle) and had it, along with the house lights, wired into the lighting console.

Artistic

- A very active and imaginative Artistic Committee which is starting to plan three years ahead and proposing many creative ideas.
- The hiring of professional director Liz Hobbs to direct *Romeo and Juliet*. Besides raising the capacity of our company in numerous ways, this resulted in a very fine production

and also in a crop of enthusiastic and capable young thespians eager to do more theatre.

- A very successful *Theatre on the Edge* under the coordination of newcomer Joannell Clarke. We made money this time.

Administration

- Creation of a capital reserve policy so that we have money when we need it for capital improvements and requiring us to “pay it back” so that it is there for an urgent need, such as, replacing a furnace.
- Became a member of Arts BC
- A very successful year of soliciting new sponsorship money and grants, much of it being matched by the ArtsVest program. Huge thanks to Joyce Henderson and Jaci Metivier for this fine work.
- Development of a comprehensive marketing plan for the entire season, with a theme and graphic design principles and an expansion of our social media outreach.

The Board spends a day each spring in a retreat setting to do some big picture reviewing and planning. Much of this year’s retreat was looking at our own board functioning. It stacks up pretty well with the “best practices” model we looked at, but we are considering some changes. One is already in practice with this year’s nominations process. This change has each board member holding a “portfolio” or area of responsibility. This year’s goal: Chair (president), Finance (vice president), Administration (secretary), Bookkeeping (treasurer), Production, Building, Marketing/Publicity, Resource Development, and one or two without portfolio.

A second proposed change is to elect board members for longer terms. Two year terms would help with continuity, staggered so that half the board is elected each year. We are also considering a maximum number of years a person may serve before taking a break. These changes require bylaw changes and therefore will wait for our next AGM.

One of our biggest challenges is in the technical end of productions. We are badly in need of additional people who can take on the task of designing, programming and operating the soundscape for a production. We also need more Producers, Stage Managers, Set Designers and Lighting people. We have mentored new people into these roles but often they do not come back to take on a show of their own. This is an ongoing challenge. If you are interested, please step forward.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow board members for their hard work and cooperation in achieving what we have done together. They are Hammy McClymont (vice president who has assisted greatly in keeping me organized in my president’s role), Sherry Bowlby (treasurer) Tracy Nash, Paula Shields, Peter Molnar, Monica Gignac, Kathy Moore and Bea Kirkwood-Hackett.

Onward and upward!

Kim MacMillan