



MINTO ARTS COUNCIL

Annual Report for 2023

INTRODUCTION:

A Message from the President

As I reflect on the last year, I look to the core group of volunteers that are the glue that holds us together and the heart of the Minto Arts Council. Like so many other volunteer organizations, the Minto Arts Council would not exist without this team of people who are our arts council family. Nowhere have I experienced such selfless dedication to the promotion of the arts in our community. This core group, of which I am proud to be a part of, consisting of Gord Duff, Warren Grein, Eleanor Butt, Judy Tuck, Wendy Lockhart and Raissa Rogers have gone above and beyond to keep this gallery open so we can continue promoting the arts within our Community.

Although we are but a few bodies, we have gained trust in one another and have really grown as a team. This was reflected through **innovation** thanks to Warren; **responsible investment** thanks to Gord; **solid coordination of volunteers** thanks to Judy; **great team spirit and commitment** like that of Wendy; **perseverance with ever improving results** at the silent auction thanks to Eleanor / Warren; **forging of increasing bonds and inter-regional ties to the artist community** thanks to Julianne and **crossing all boundaries via our on-line presence** thanks to Raissa. We can all pat ourselves on the back, as we look forward to another successful year and strive for continuous improvement. We had to say goodbye to Lynn Phelps and said hello to Shayne Lamont our student volunteer as we look forward to another successful year.

Basement Cafe

No basement cafes were held as we decided to discontinue this as the attendance was too low and it was therefore not profitable for us to keep putting the shows on.

Art Exhibits

Attendance stats for 2023 have increased and are noted below:

January/February	Real and Beyond	69
March	Soon to be Forgotten	49
April	3 Views of Ontario	84
May	Juried Art Show	175
June	Norwell (short show)	110
Sept.	Saugeen Artists	44
Oct.	KWSA cancelled	0
Nov/Dec	Silent Auction	238
Total		1169

The good news is that we showed a steady increase in attendance again and we would like to see this trend continue, so we should discuss promotion again. Despite attendance increasing over the past year, we have observed that new attendees to the gallery are not necessarily from our community but are friends and family of the artists. While we are encouraged, we would like the Minto Arts Council to be better attended by local residents and for this we will need to continue to promote ourselves and raise local awareness of our presence in the community.

Despite the need to increase our attendance and our ongoing need to continue to promote the gallery and the arts in our community, the gallery continues to attract great artists from near and far which is encouraging and is something that should instill a great sense of community pride.

Juried Show

The juried show was resurrected in 2023 after the 2 year suspension brought on by the pandemic and we had record number of participants of all ages including 3 children, some as young as 10 years of age! It was exciting to see the enthusiasm over the juried show and had over 30 artists participate. We also owe gratitude to our supporters for prizes, the jurors, the media and our artist community for the success of this show. It is always refreshing to see the variety and the talent within the community. we look forward to having this staple event blossom into the coming years and continue as an annual event.

Silent Auction

The Silent Auction continues to be our biggest fundraiser which thanks to a great response to the online component of the Auction, in addition to the in person bids and generous donations from our community, we raised a record-breaking \$8,667. This amount was up 65% from 2022.

The annual Holiday Season Silent Auction was held November 14th to Dec 2. For the first time, an online auction was introduced using the Auctria program. The program was well received as 62 bidders registered online & 76 registered in house for a total of 138 bidders. The Maple Leaf tickets had the most bidding online activity. The benefit for bidders was that they could view items online vs coming to the gallery. When

bidders bid on items an email was automatically sent confirming their bid. If the bidder was outbid by another bidder, they instantly received an email indicating their bid was cancelled. This provided an opportunity for rebidding to end of auction closing. The Auctria program provided online payments by credit card. Breakdown of payments - 30% credit card, 32% cash, 32% cheque, and 8% e-transfer-a new payment option for 2023. There was a great variety of 137 items available. All items were placed online with a picture, a description of the item. Another format change for the in-house items was assigning bidder #'s to the bidders. Bidders then recorded their assigned numbers on the items they were interested in vs recording their name for more privacy.

For the very first time, the Minto Art Gallery was a featured stop on the Harriston Curling Club Christmas house tour. The auction closing date coincided with the Harriston Curling Club Christmas Home tour with the Minto Art Gallery as one of the featured stops. This stop provided a great opportunity for first time visitors to the Art Gallery- a fantastic benefit for the Gallery. However, as the auction closed at 1 pm, the house tour had many homes to visit on the tour, which closed at 5 pm. Many visitors didn't have time to register & bid on items. Shortly after both events ended, a review and action plan was completed by the House tour committee and M.A.C to better co-ordinate for 2024. The Art Gallery will again be a featured stop in 2024. A win-win for both community events!

Also, new this year, after the auction closed, a survey was prepared and emailed to all the bidders for feedback. The results provided valuable information, which will be reviewed for the 2024 auction. Board members and gallery volunteers completed a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis. Excellent feedback & comments were welcomed and appreciated. Overall, it was a very successful auction.

To echo the statements made in the Treasurer's Report, our Town of Minto community came through with increased donations and support so that we were able to raise a significant amount through the Christmas Silent Auction, which is our primary fund- raiser. Vice-President Eleanor Butt and Director Warren Grein and their team were very successful and their hard work paid off. Our continuous improvement lead us to combine our silent auction with the House Tour with encouraging attendance results. In this regard, we have decided to continue to forge these partnership of events in order to encourage residents to visit our gallery even if they have never been. This continues to demonstrate that we have a very loyal community!!! Bravo and well done team we came out on top despite many challenges and competing community events.

Archie Award

Another example of where the Minto Arts Council is very community minded is the Archie Award. Each year a student from each of our elementary schools is chosen to receive the Archie Award along with a \$50.00 prize for their work in studying art and to encourage their potential in this field. This is but one small way we give back to our community. The 2023 Winner of the Archie Award was Lydia Dirksen from Minto Clifford and Danica Suchanova at Palmerston Public.

Bursary and Scholarship

Each year the Minto Arts Council also provides a \$300.00 scholarship to a Norwell High School student wishing to study art in a post-secondary setting. This is awarded at the graduation ceremony at Commencement in the fall. In 2023 the Minto Arts Council presented a \$300.00 prize to Tegwyn Kelly a very talented young artist from the area.

Closing remarks

In summary, we are community minded, support our local activities, partner with others, raise awareness about the arts, support our educational establishments, and build relationships with young and old. The Minto Arts Council provides a venue to mentor and continue to raise awareness throughout our community and beyond, by bringing art to this community! We are now being sought from artists beyond our community and we are on the map...people want to show in our gallery! These are exciting times for our little community.

The annual report will reflect upon the past year's challenges and achievements despite the challenges and highlight our successes along the way. The success of the Minto Arts Council would not be possible without the assistance of our dedicated volunteer group, as well as strong support from the community.

ADMINISTRATION

The 2023 Board of Directors was as follows.

Past President	Juliane vonWesterholt
President	Juliane von Westerholt
Vice-President	Eleanor Butt
Treasurer	Gord Duff
Secretary	Vacant
Directors	Judy Tuck
	Raissa Rogers
	Wendy Lockwood

A new Board will be elected at the 2023 AGM. We thank our dedicated Board Members for their contributions in raising the awareness of the arts in Minto, without whose efforts our gallery would not be in existence.

TREASURER'S REPORT & FUNDRAISING

Silent Auction

2023 was a very good year for the Minto Arts Council primarily due to a successful Silent Auction, which is our primary fund-raiser. We were also able to host a full slate of exhibits in our gallery including the return of the Juried Art Show. We continue to receive many complements from returning visitors and new people to the gallery on the significant lighting improvements and the painting of the gallery, which we completed during the closure as part of the Covid 19 restrictions. The

gallery refresh has helped generate much interest in our local gem and has initiated a solid come back with shows and exhibits.

The Arts Council's principal fund-raiser is the annual Christmas Silent Auction. Thanks to a great response to the online component of the Auction, in addition to the in person bids and generous donations from our community, we raised a record-breaking \$8,667. This amount was up 65% from 2022. Thanks go to Warren Grein for all of his work with the implementation and operation of the online platform. Of course, we also owe thanks to all who assisted with the Silent Auction under the leadership of Eleanor Butt, Ruth Wilkin and Warren. Even with some costs related to the online auction, it was a very worthwhile initiative. Minto Arts Council partnered with the Harriston Curling Club as a stop on the annual Christmas House Tour. This was a fitting bookend to our auction period which kicks off as a passport stop in Harriston Rising's annual merchant night. This connection was instrumental in introducing the presence of our gallery in the community to many who, although long-time residents, were unaware of the gallery's existence.

Community Leadership in Volunteer Recruitment

Once again, the Minto Arts Council has stepped forward to lead a significant project in the broader Minto Community. Gordon Duff and Belinda Wick-Graham prepared an application under the federal Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF) in February 2023. This program is open to Registered Charities with the most relevant stream being administered by the Canadian Red Cross. In July 2023, after several interviews, phone calls and exchanges of correspondence, we learned that we our application was successful.

The goal of this project is to revitalize the non-profit organizations and their volunteers for nine participating Minto groups. This program is being led by Project Co-ordinator Lynn Jamieson, who was hired in September 2023. She began with gathering information about the groups to **assess** their situations, strengths and weaknesses and look for opportunities to ensure sustainability and success in the years to come. This project must be concluded by the end of June 2024, so Lynn has been very busy conducting surveys, interviews, seminars and training to meet the milestones, which have been set in the contract between the Minto Arts Council and the Canadian Red Cross. All financial transactions are being flowed through the books of the Arts Council and shown separately on the Financial Statements.

Expenses

Other than the items previously noted, expenses were back to normal pre-pandemic levels. HST rebate returns were completed in early 2023 and resulted in \$1,874 being received this year. The nominal operating surplus was \$33,981, but when the pre-payments and incurred expenses of the CSRF project are excluded, the arts council was still able to post a surplus of \$3,958 in contrast to the deficit of \$3,163 incurred in 2022. We can look confidently to the future!

MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEERS

We continue to seek the support of individuals and families from the community to join us as members. Membership fees are very reasonable at \$15 per person and \$25 per family.

In 2023 , we had 29 active volunteers. Of these, five were students and four of those have completed their required hours and discontinued volunteering. Five of our adult volunteers were new in 2023. We are thankful for the work of our volunteers and could not operate as many hours as we do without their faithful service.

For the majority of our volunteers their contribution is gallery-sitting and they would likely be open to other opportunities, so the various committees are encouraged to ask for volunteer help and continue to engage new volunteers in our activities. In particular, we are in need of lots of helpers for the Christmas Silent Auction, and to assist with the mounting of exhibits.

MARKETING

Our Marketing Coordinator Raissa Rogers who has kept our website current and has done a great job enhancing our online presence with social media such as Instagram and Facebook. Raissa continues to support our Gallery with the social media presence. The results for the 2023 is listed below:

Stats 2023

01/01/2023 – 31/12/2023

posts made: 175

stories: 0*

FB page likes : 689

New Facebook Page likes: 70 (+52.2%)

Facebook Page reach: 16.449 (+36.2%)

Facebook Page visits: 2100 (+226.5%)

*Stories published on Instagram are also posted on Facebook

Instagram 01/01/2023 - 31/12/2023

Posts made: 121

stories: 15

Followers: 497

New Instagram followers: 35 (-)

Instagram reach: 1100 (+45.5%)

Instagram profile visits: 275 (+192.6%)

The website statistics are not completely accurate because Google Analytics was changed halfway

through the year, and I wasn't able to retrieve the data from before June 04, 2023. Regardless, even

with the data collected in the last 6 months, there's a positive trend visible.

Website (04/06/2023 – 31/12/2023):

Total users: 1.511

Page views: 21.262

Most popular pages:

1. /home/ (18.382 page views)

2. /mac-christmas-silent-auction-2023/ (497 page views)

3. /minto-arts-gallery/ (368 page views)

Pages/Session: 2.075 Avg. Session Duration: 00:02:39

Top traffic channels: organic search, direct, organic social

Mailchimp Newsletter 2023 :

7 newsletters sent

January

February

March

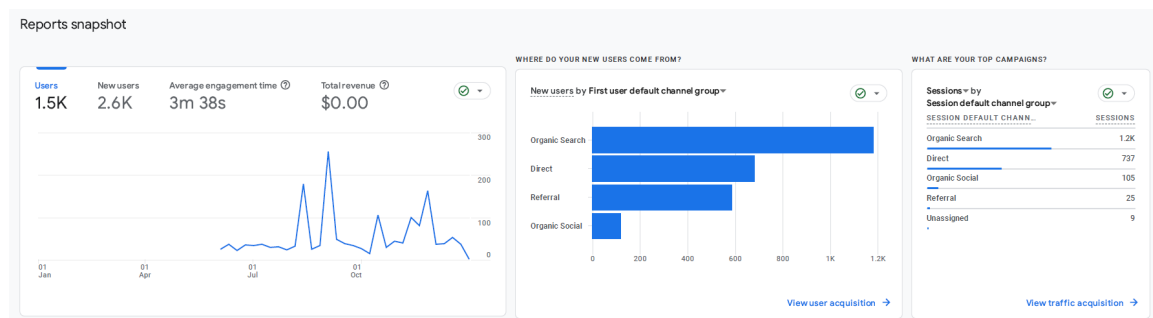
April

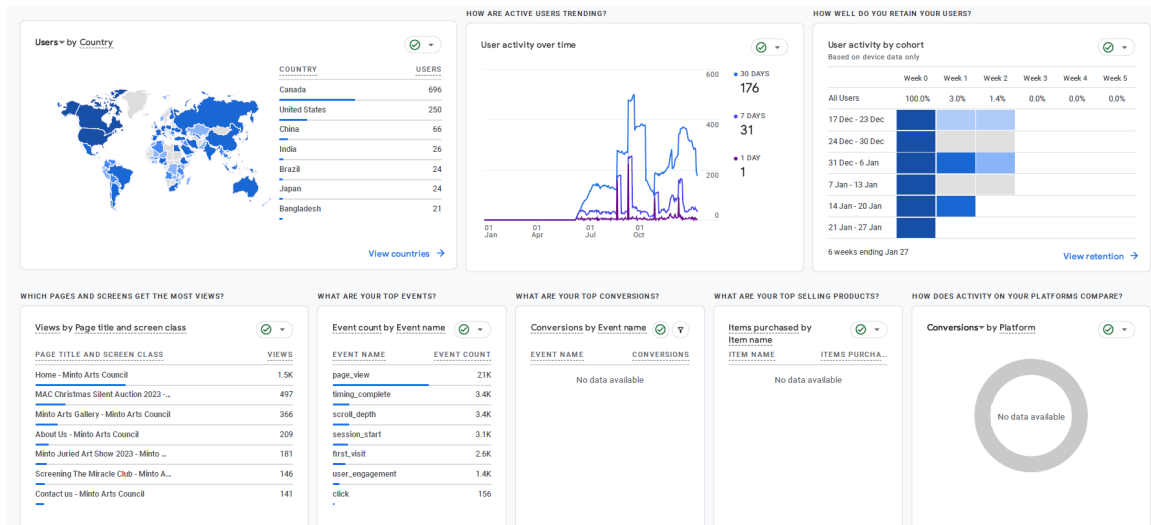
May

September

November

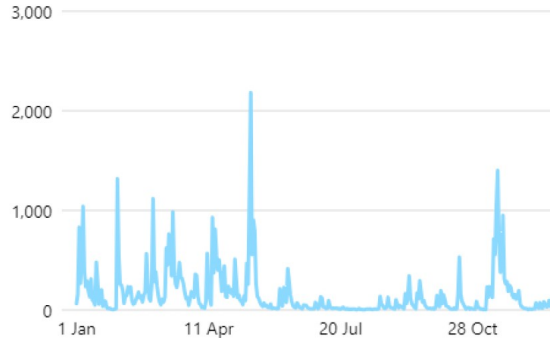
total subscribers: 333 (+9)



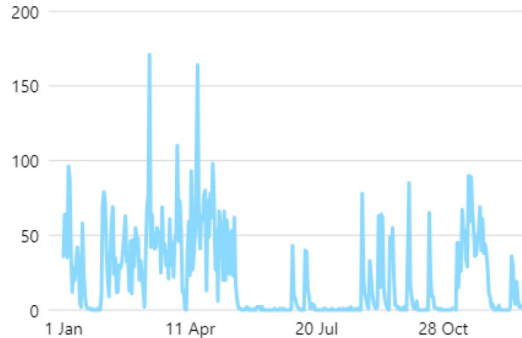


Reach

Facebook reach ⓘ
16.4K ↑ 36.2%



Instagram reach ⓘ
1.1K ↑ 45.5%



COMMUNITY EVENTS, ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS

Gallery volunteers and Arts Council board members participated in several events and activities to raise awareness and garner support for the Council and Gallery.

- Minto Arts Council representatives have participated in and on various committees, workshops and forums including the Town of Minto Cultural Roundtable and the Symposium for Performing Arts in Rural Ontario (SPARC).

PROJECTS FOR 2024

In 2024 we hope to continue to be involved in groups like the Minto Cultural Roundtable and SPARC, as well as work with similar organizations in Minto and surrounding areas to promote the Arts in Rural Communities.

Volunteer recruitment and retention, as well as promotion of the gallery will also be an on-going area of focus in 2024.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again, our success could not have been achieved without the support from the following businesses, institutions, community groups and individuals:

- All Minto Arts Council Board Members & Volunteers
- Artists & Exhibitors
- Minto-Clifford Public School, Palmerston Public School & Norwell District Secondary School
- Mayor Dave Turton, Mayor's Golf Tournament
- Town of Minto Council and Staff
- Harriston Home Hardware
- Staff at Harriston Public Library
- Our private sponsors
- Wellington Advertiser and Minto Express/ Community News
- The River radio station in Wingham
- Innovative Print- Harriston

