



## Arts council reflects on year of changes

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The Haliburton Highlands Arts Council welcomed six new members to its board at the organization's annual general meeting held on Nov. 4 at Fleming College.

The new members were just a part of a wave of changes the council has gone through during the 2009-2010 fiscal year, including staff changes, fundraising and programming initiatives.

"There have been lots of changes, which aren't always painless," said Lesley English, chairwoman of the organization's board of directors. "However, we are in a much stronger position going forward to further the organization's goals."

The council welcomed Donna Gagnon as the new communication coordinator and administrative assistant following Mark Arike's departure. Later in the meeting, Arike was voted onto the council's board of directors.

Gail Stelter was welcomed by the organization as the new education coordinator.

English said there were many things going on behind the scenes of the organization, including finalizing the charity arm of the council and furthering the library of resources.

This past year the organization also welcomed Kim McBrien as the new coordinator using a grant from the Haliburton County Development Corporation.

"This has been the most challenging and rewarding work of my life," said McBrien as she fought back tears. "Every single board member works so hard."

McBrien highlighted two fundraising events that combined brought in more than \$16,000.

This year the organization also revamped its events calendar, which for the first time was distributed to all four municipalities in the county, which included 28,500 households.

According to the report submitted by the marketing committee, the additional mail-out resulted in an increase in direct distribution of 718 per cent over previous years.

"The marketing committee works harder than any group I have seen in my life," said McBrien.

During the meeting, the board of directors proposed a bylaw amendment that changed the number of members needed to form quorum from 15 to 13, due to the challenge of forming quorum at regular board meetings.

The amendment was passed through a unanimous vote, following which six new members were added to the board including Mark Arike, Darby Bayly, Caroline Collins, Lauren Forbes, Heidi Hudspith and Betty Ujvari.

"We've just added six fabulous people to our board," said English.

The new members replace eight board members who have decided to step down from the board, while seven current members will continue to serve.

According to English, the council will be putting a new executive into place at the December meeting.

Following the AGM the arts council hosted the 12th annual Arty Party in the Great Hall at the college.

This year's theme, the hat party, saw headpieces of all colours and regalia adorning the guests' heads as they ate delicious food.

