

RAAC Newsletter Special Edition February 2016



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Hello members and friends!

As we enter 2016 and get ready to launch our annual membership campaign in February, I want to update you on RAAC - our own State of the Union, or State of the Rappahannock Association for Arts and Community.

From a bottom-line perspective, we're solid. We have funds in the bank to cover unforeseen contingencies, to make modest capital investments where needed, and to replenish our Claudia Mitchell Arts Fund through which we award grants to local artists and organizations.

Over the past two years, our membership has grown by over 33%, and total contributions have increased by over 85%! Our programs and events are hitting a responsive chord across the community. Our financial health benefits from RAAC being an all-volunteer organization, including a talented Board and amazing volunteers, tremendous audience attendance, and the strong backing of friends and neighbors who believe in our mission - Inspire Art, Build Community.

In 2015 we inaugurated our first annual Film Festival at Little Washington to the delight of the community. Enthusiasm is already building for our second film festival this April. Our annual Artists of Rappahannock Studio & Gallery Tour entered its 11th year and attracted nearly a thousand visitors to Rappahannock. Our First Friday at the Movies continued to show first-run films. We've installed a new screen, and we're preparing to replace our sound system - now over 25 years old - for your viewing and listening pleasure. Second Friday at the Library seems to have morphed into our own version of Ted Talks. Overflowing crowds are listening and questioning local and national experts on a host of topics. The Soup & Soul series continues to have sold-out attendance.

Our RAAC Community Theatre continues to raise the quality and range of its dramatic offerings, which have become so popular that we've had to add extra performances. We also invested in new drapery for our theater to darken the space for matinees and are steadily renovating the basement for much needed storage. RAAC's Claudia Mitchell Arts Fund awarded \$32,000 in grants in 2015, all generated from net proceeds from programs and generous contributions. Grants ranged from helping individual artists, to enabling organizations bring arts programs to children, to supporting public performances.

In 2015 we completely revamped our website - please have a look because we think it's better looking and easier to navigate. There you'll find helpful information about upcoming programs, back issues of our newsletter, and links to other Rappahannock resources. You can also read about our board members, submit questions, volunteer, donate to RAAC, and reserve tickets to our performances online. We also refreshed our logo and just finished redesigning the RAAC Brochure, which you'll see

along with our membership letter arriving soon. Our monthly emailed RAAC Newsletter started almost three years ago and continues to evolve, becoming a go-to place for what's happening in the local arts scene.

All in all, I feel that RAAC is an energetic and dynamic organization that continues to grow and find new ways to inspire the arts and build community. In 2015 we began collaborating with other local organizations to find community synergies - both directly and indirectly through RAAC's Claudia Mitchell Arts Fund. We continue to attract dedicated and talented volunteers, which is one of our three pillars. The second is the group of artists and participants who make our programs happen. And our third pillar is composed of supporters who contribute to RAAC so generously.

Thank you!

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President, RAAC

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