

# RAAC Newsletter State of RAAC Special Edition



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### **Hello friends!**

As we enter 2017, I'm delighted to state that RAAC is in excellent shape. We are generating lots of energy, bubbling with new ideas, and enjoying great momentum. Over the past five years, our membership has grown by over 50%, and total contributions have tripled! Our programs are hitting a responsive chord across the community, the quality and quantity of events have increased, and we're channeling net income back into the community via arts grants.

From a bottom-line perspective, we're solid. We have funds in the bank to cover unforeseen contingencies, make modest capital investments, and replenish our Claudia Mitchell Arts Fund through which we award grants to local artists and organizations. RAAC benefits from being a volunteer organization, from our talented Board, amazing volunteers, and tremendous audience attendance, to the strong backing of friends and neighbors who believe in our mission to Inspire Art, Build Community.

In 2015 we inaugurated our first annual Film Festival to the delight of the community. Enthusiasm is already building for our third Film Festival this April. Our annual Art Tour celebrated its 12th year and attracted over a thousand visitors to Rappahannock - to the benefit of local B&Bs, restaurants, stores, and wineries. Our First Friday at the Movies screened first-run films that looked and sounded even better with our new screen and sound equipment. We even replaced our popcorn machine! Partnering with other nonprofits, we launched Q&A sessions after some movies ("Rosenwald" and "Spotlight"). Given the enthusiastic response, we'll do it again.

Standing-room-only crowds are listening and questioning local and national experts on a host of topics at our Second Friday at the Library series. We're now contemplating a larger venue to accommodate the growing audience. The RAAC Community Theatre continues to raise the quality and range of its dramatic offerings - No Ordinary Person, The Odd Couple, 12 Days of Christmas, and Tom Stoppard's Arcadia - which have become so popular that we've added extra performances. And our Soup & Soul series - local artists discussing their work and creative processes at gatherings held in host homes - remains the hardest event to get tickets for in Rappahannock.

RAAC's Mitchell Arts Fund awarded \$41,000 in grants in 2016, all generated from net proceeds from programs and your generous contributions. Over the past four years, we have given back over \$130K to the community through arts grants - ranging from helping individual artists, to enabling organizations bring arts programs to children, to supporting public performances. Commentators would call this a virtuous cycle.

On our website ([click here](#)) you'll find helpful information about upcoming programs, board members, volunteer opportunities, and online ways to donate and reserve tickets. Another source of arts information is our monthly RAAC Newsletter, the go-to place for

what's happening in the local arts scene.

RAAC is energized and guided by our belief that a community infused with the arts is stronger, livelier, and more connected. This conviction has remained true ever since our founding in 1983. Our organization rests on three pillars: dedicated and talented volunteers, artists and participants who make our programs happen, and supporters who contribute to RAAC so generously.

***Thank you!***

Matthew Black  
President, RAAC

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[www.raac.org](http://www.raac.org)

**Rappahannock Association for Arts and Community**

PO Box 24  
Washington, VA 22747

1-800-695-6075

RAAC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization staffed solely by volunteers.

Email us at

[newsletter@raac.org](mailto:newsletter@raac.org)



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RAAC, PO Box 24, Washington, VA 22747

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**Constant Contact** 