

Local artists work on idea there's strength in numbers

by MICHELE GOUETT

Artists and craftsmen in North Simcoe are going to unite.

On Sunday afternoon, 40 local artists and craftsmen were on hand at the Inn at Bay Moorings for a meeting with Community Futures representatives (formerly LEAD) to explore the possibility of the different sectors coming together to form an association.

According to Community Futures Commissioner Kamran Khozan, the meeting was called in response to a number of inquiries the local project commissioner received from the various artists across North Simcoe.

At the meeting, Khozan told the artists, as far as the government was concerned, the individual artist did not qualify for the monies available under the program to help create full-time employment, increase productivity of local businesses and increase profitability of the area.

Khozan said by incorporating he could deal with the artists as a group more effectively and efficiently.

Not only could the group possibly tap into the \$75-million budgeted by the federal government in the February budget available for the Arts in Canada, but as an organization Khozan said it would give them lobbying power that doesn't presently exist.

After a lengthy discussion between the artists present, which evolved around the possibility of creating a school of arts in the area and the organization of a festival such as the Parry Sound Festival of Sound or the Buckhorn Art Festival, Community Futures

Board of Directors Chairman Robert Hartog, told the group, although their input was appreciated, in order for such events to take place the many interested people had to come together to get something of that calibre off the ground.

"We must organize so we can jointly do something, jointly we are stronger than individually," said Hartog.

After considerable discussion, a six member steering committee was struck to look into the forming of a non-profit organization of the artists.

According to Khozan, the mandate of the steering committee is to arrange a mass public meeting for all the local artists and not just a handful like the Sunday meeting. Once the date has been set up the committee will set out to inform all the artists of the meeting which will be held at the Bud Watson Gallery in Midland.

The steering committee will also be responsible for coming up with a format that the organization will take.

Khozan said to try to set up such an organization at the first meeting of the public would be too difficult.

In order for the group to incorporate, the Community Futures project has agreed to cover 50 percent of the legal costs with the artists picking up the other half of the estimated \$1,000.

The steering committee of Jennifer Johnson, Paul Benedet, Steve Cousineau, Paul Kirkup, Randy Borwn and Carol Becker are to meet with Khozan again this morning to set up a meeting and the format for the organization.

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Dear Editor:

The Victoria Harbour Parks and Recreation Board would like to thank you for your support in helping us with our Mini Bonhomme Carnival.

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Yours truly,

Dennis Esterbrooks,
Victoria Harbour Parks
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