

Lunenburg Heritage House Tour 2009
Final Report
Pamela Barker, *Chair*

Overview

I'm thrilled to report that the 2009 House Tour was an overwhelming success. The following is a brief overview of the Tour, with recommendations for 2011. Further detail and additional suggestions are included in the appended reports of sub-committee chairs.

Meeting notes, information sheets, time-lines, and copies of correspondence are also appended.

Unlike in 2007 where the committee had just six months to plan and prepare, this time we had 18 + months. Although the time contributed to the overall success of the event and gave us the opportunity to implement *all* of our 2007 recommendations, it couldn't help but result in a certain amount of 'fatigue'.

We were proud to introduce *Soiree by the Sea* this year. Most of the members were anxious to establish a 'template' for an exclusive event aligned with Lunenburg Heritage Society. It was a grand evening and we were delighted to exceed our goals. *The majority of the committee recommends a stand-alone event in 'intervening' years.*

General Budget [Attached.]

	<u>Projected</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Revenue	\$29,950	\$29,808
Expenditures	\$ 8,487	\$ 7,669
Net Profit	\$21,463	\$22,139

[Possible minor changes upon final income statement.]

This represents an increase of approximately 40% in net profit over 2007! It is due primarily to the 'Soiree', an Increase of \$5 in ticket price, and procurement of additional sponsors

Committee [See list.]

The committee was expanded by two - a volunteer co-chair and Soiree chair. The LHS liaison position was changed to community liaison.

Hospitality Susan Pratt (Chair)

Committee of 14; 178 + 110 served over 2 days (< 36%); 58 individuals donated baked goods (< 12%). Cost per person \$2.45. Non-sweets included this year and were very popular as was music. Very comprehensive report, with 2007 included for reference.

Consider 1:30-4:30; non-bakers contribute fruit.

Houses / Properties Janet Palmer (Chair)

A fabulous selection of seven houses (c1775 – 2007) and Adams & Knickle. Wide range of styles and ages was *very* well received. Janet also recruited artists, contacted churches, and coordinated floral arrangements. It was suggested that paintings be 8x10. Artists were given a tax receipt for \$250 and complimentary one-year membership in the Society.

Note cards of paintings of eight properties initiated as a revenue generator.

Eric Croft might be approached to conduct tours of Town or cemetery. (Mindful that Tour itself is a full day.)

Publicity / Advertising Wendy DeMarco (Chair)

The major expenses for the Tour reside with this portfolio. Wendy did an admirable job of procuring excellent exposure and quality printed materials. She outlined and implemented a comprehensive plan ('Herald' and 'Progress'). This was also good exposure and recognition for corporate sponsors. CTV did interview at Butler home.

Wendy has compiled and donated a portfolio of information on previous house tours. This also includes a CD with her files for 2007 and 2009.

Again this year, Judith Carey's design, printing, and coordination were invaluable. *[Judith's CD of complete program files included.]*

Signage – invested in new signage, but it was too small and not easily read.

Improve signage 2011. Continue general interest story leads, as they are very effective promos. Distribute Press Release at least two weeks in advance and follow-up with target market areas, especially for PSAs and interviews.

Increase number of posters printed and distribute several weeks in advance.

Ticket Sales and Coordination Susan Cosgrove (Chair)

The Soiree presented an opportunity to bundle price - \$25 for either Tour (567) or Soiree (118); \$40 for a 'Combo' (163). Thus, approximately 730 House Tour tickets were sold and 280 Soiree.

The majority of ticket purchasers were from HRM and Lunenburg County. Use of PayPal was effective and we are grateful to LHS for implementing this upon our request. We dispensed with retail outlets, other than availability at KRH. During the weekend, tickets could be purchased at Lunenburg Visitor Information Centre (fewer sold than in 2007) and at the properties on Tour.

A new 'lottery-style' ticket was printed and found to be very useful for sales by individuals.

Without question, individual sales are effective. Suggest a clearly coordinated approach – perhaps a committee - for advance sales. [Chair's opinion that the booklet is not necessary for advance sales as it is expensive to produce, would need to be replaced if lost, and would unlikely be mailed to on-line purchasers.] Consider including more information about properties on-line and expanding promotion of the site.

Telephone message machine at KRH should include information on where to obtain tickets.

More regular communication with staff and volunteers at KRH re sales policy and practice.

Develop improved guidelines to reinstate position of Treasurer / Tickets to provide current financial data for committee.

Volunteers

Heather Lockhart and Barbara Bond (Co-chairs)

As always, very labour-intensive, particularly with addition of Soiree that required a team of 30 volunteers. Special thanks to Heather for volunteering to serve as 'captain' at Front Rum Point, in addition to her other responsibilities.

Barbara organized and distributed comprehensive notes for volunteers at respective properties. Overwhelmingly positive remarks about well-trained guides.

Having co-chairs did not result in reducing the workload by 50%, or even close to it. If this is the choice going forward, every attempt should be made to divide volunteer list (as was done this year) and also list of houses for placement, etc. so as to eliminate duplication to the greatest possible degree. *Request 'Read Receipt' for confirmation of volunteer placement.*

Advance notification of Volunteer Appreciation Party didn't result in an increase in attendance. There are always a number of reasons for this. That said, we still recommend the night of the event.

Continue costumes; expand 'strollers' if possible; encourage Mayor and Council to volunteer, and endeavour to increase participation of LHS members.

Include line for volunteer expenditures in budget.

Community Liaison

Sue Kelly (Chair)

Following our 2007 recommendation to enhance community involvement, this was a new focus for us.

Sue arranged for banner placement and interfaced with Town and RCMP regarding security barricades. *[House captains should be advised to erect these in front of the home for safety reasons.]* Through Lunenburg Board of Trade she sent letters to merchants, restaurants and tourist accommodations. Response was very minimal, but improved slightly just before the event when personal visits were made and posters and rack cards distributed.

She also submitted a successful grant application to Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage (\$350), liaised with Musique Royale

re scheduling a concert on the Saturday evening, and made arrangements for an excellent display in window at Kinley Drug.

Re-evaluate benefits of approach through mass mailing. Rack cards not considered effective. (Possible substitute included.) The 2011 committee may wish to redefine the focus of this position.

Corporate Sponsorship

[Primarily the responsibility of the chair.]

The committee decided against sponsorship levels or naming opportunity for individual corporate sponsorship. We increased number of \$500 sponsors to eight. [Aubrey Zinck General Contracting, BMR Lunenburg Hardware, Bailly's Fuels Ltd, Heritage Landscape, NSBS – Castle Building Supplies Ltd., Quentin Mason Electrical, Target Food Brokers Inc., West Nova Fuels Ltd.] With other donations, corporate contributions totalled \$4450. We also had a grant of \$350 from Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

Logos were included on rack card, advertisements, website, and wherever possible. Excellent exposure for \$500 contribution.

Continue early solicitation.

The level has been \$500 since implementation in 2003. Is it time to increase the level, by providing expanded recognition opportunities?? [Obvious associated risks.]

Soiree by the Sea

Maureen Hope (Chair)

Intended primarily to capture the local market. Given that this was a new event and the economy had entered a significant downturn in months of early planning, prices were set at just \$25 (\$20 'combo'). Original limit of 200 was increased to 250 and could easily have sold 300. Fabulous hors d'oeuvres generously donated by Fleur de Sel, Tinfish Restaurant, and Trattoria Della Nonna. Also included sparkling wine (Seaview), classical music, and a chance to tour a stunning waterfront home and property.

Recommend for 'off-Tour' years. This would allow the event to be held several weeks earlier (warmer weather). Increase price;

continue to limit number of tickets; begin at 4:30, especially if mid-September.

New / Expanded Initiatives for 2009

- Soiree by the Sea
- Ticket format for advanced individual sales
- Use of Pay Pal for on-line purchases
- Compiled data base of volunteers
- Analyzed information from response forms
- Initiated Community Liaison position on committee

Suggestions / Recommendations for 2011

- LHS Board should make an early decision as to whether Soiree (or similar event) should be continued and if so, whether in conjunction with House Tour or in alternate years
- Enhanced liaison between Board and House Tour Committee (perhaps different committee member could attend meetings to update Board)
- Carefully define liaison / responsibilities of committee treasurer and LHS treasurer
- Improved signage – larger signs for properties and major intersections; signage for Academy
- Increase number of posters printed and distribute at least two-three weeks in advance
- More information on website and earlier. Expand usage of website.
- Continue earliest possible selection of properties
- Consider changing ‘name’ to Lunenburg House Tour, sponsored by Lunenburg Heritage Society and continue to include other than ‘heritage’ homes to appeal to a broader spectrum
- Separate sales force for tickets; possible increase in price
- Use one or more testimonials for promotion
- Formally include tours of Lunenburg Academy. It is a real highlight.
- *See also italicized comments above*

Conclusion

Without question, Lunenburg Heritage House Tour 2009 was an unqualified success, with: a stellar new event, increased sponsorship and volunteer support, interesting properties of wide-ranging ages, hugely positive comments from attendees, and unprecedented financial return.

These impressive results – achieved in spite of a weakened economy - are due entirely to the energetic, enthusiastic committee members who worked tirelessly for the best possible outcome. I am deeply appreciative of their enormous commitment.

My sincerest thanks also to owners and sponsors, volunteers and donors, ticket purchasers, LHS Board members, and *all* who contributed to this outstanding effort.

Although the number of tickets sold over the past several tours has been relatively consistent, there remains opportunity for growth and creativity. We are privileged to have a treasured Town and UNESCO Heritage Site to promote, many exceptional properties yet to be explored, and much untapped potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to chair the past two Tours in support of Lunenburg Heritage Society and very best wishes for continued success.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela J. Barker
Chair