



## Shakespeare Festival poised for a successful 10th anniversary season

Posted Jan 26, 2012 [By Jill Hudson](#)

---



*Jill Hudson, St. Lawrence EMC*

The St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival held its annual general meeting at the Red George in Prescott on Jan. 19. The evening included reports from Sandra Lawn, Chair of the Board, Rebecca Campbell, festival general manager, Alvin Bennett presented the treasurer's report. Ian Farthing, festival artistic director, made his report via pre-recorded video and Powerpoint presentation. Pictured here are Campbell and Lawn with the 2012 season poster.

EMC News - The St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival (SLSF) will build on the success of its initial nine years as it marks its 10th anniversary season in 2012.

During the organization's annual meeting at the Red George in Prescott Jan. 19, event coordinators looked at highlights of previous years and peered ahead to their 10th anniversary season - which has been dubbed the Year of the Volunteer.

In her presentation, festival chairperson Sandra Lawn included photos relating to special people and events from 2011.

"We are very proud of the artistic excellence of the festival," said Lawn.

Later in the report Lawn said, "It is more than a festival. I know for a fact that it's changed people's lives. (I am) very proud of what we've been able to achieve."

Alvin Bennett presented the financial report - which has not come back from the auditor. During the report Bennett showed that the festival's 2011 season is ahead financially over its previous year. This is a result of its HST recovery, an Ontario Trillium Grant of \$18,000 - which helps cover expenses for 2011 and this coming season. The festival sold a tent during the 2011 season for \$4,000 which also put the theatre company ahead. During 2010 the Shakespeare festival paid \$4,124 for the writing of "Dibble Street" which they did not have to pay in 2011. The cash position at the end of 2011 puts SLSF \$15,170 ahead - a favourable position compared to its shortfall of \$1,905 from 2010. (This includes the Trillium grant.)

Festival art director, Ian Farthing, presented his report via a pre-recorded video and audio-enhanced Power Point. During his presentation he announced next year's line-up of Midsummer's Night Dream and Othello. Farthing said the Sunday series will continue and pre-show talks will continue on Tuesday evenings. He said ticket sales will not go up for this coming season (other than season tickets) and children 14 and younger will be able to attend plays free. Before this it was 12 and younger.

Rebecca Campbell, the festival's general manager, reported on some highlights and memories of 2011 - including saying farewell to Jessie DeVries and Greg Berrea. Highlights included the introduction of its new general manager, Campbell and new volunteer coordinator Allison Boyd.

Campbell stated the festival funding is roughly split in thirds - one-third ticket revenue, one-third government grants and one-third private donors and sponsors. (She said ticket sales presently account for 28 per cent of the festival's income.)

Campbell said the festival had a total attendance for 2011 was 4,332 people, out of town visitors accounted for 56 per cent of the sales (seven per cent from the U.S.). In 2011 there were 137 season tickets sold, 846 email subscribers and 225 children ages 12 and under attended.

#### SPECIAL DEDICATION

The 2012 season will be Year of the Volunteer - there are 167 active volunteers, including 38 new volunteers, who help with SLSF.

"Our festival was built by volunteers. There is no doubt about it," said Campbell. "While the festival continues to grow, the importance of our volunteers does not diminish....it is the volunteers who are the life, the history-keepers, the doers - who bring time, talent and resources. It is the volunteers who hold precious "institutional knowledge" and all staff have something to learn from that group of dedicated individuals."

Campbell thanked Alleyn Abel for leading the Front of House teams and all of the fundraising event volunteers.

The general manager said the volunteers are the backbone of the festival. In 2012, volunteers are invited to submit their favourite stories and photos for a "story archive."

Campbell was pleased to report that the volunteer coordinator role is here to stay in 2012 and the production manager and head of wardrobe positions are returning for the third season.

The general manager said the festival will be putting together a relationship database, "to ensure that all of the hard work, effort, and information that created this festival is not lost over time as we experience growth and change in the next 10 years."

In a separate interview with the EMC after the AGM, Campbell spoke about the value of collaborating with other entities for success.

"When you are doing any artistic venture in a smaller centre you have to rely on not only the local community but also the tourism community. That is why collaboration from a partnership point of view is so important in a smaller centre."

Her GM report states that partners of SLSF include the Town of Prescott, St. Andrew's Church, St. Paul's Church, the Rotary Club, Fort Wellington, the Prescott & District Chamber of Commerce, the Prescott BIA, Brockville Tourism and Region 9 - the Great Waterway (a new tourism district).