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Muskoka As Artland: Newman Wallis' Visionary Speech at the AGM

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With a growing awareness of the significance of the creative economy, Muskoka being made a Designated Arts Community by District Council and the hosting of the G8 in Huntsville in 2010, this surely is a watershed time for the arts in Muskoka.

What does all this mean for a far-flung community best known for freshwater lakes and for cottaging, limping through the recession like everyone else? What COULD this look like?

Enter Mr. Newman Wallis, an unassuming and well-spoken fellow who agreed to speak at our recent AGM. Mr. Wallis, Dean Emeritus of Seneca College, stood up at the modest, little old Port Sydney Community Hall on Thursday April 16, 2009, and laid the groundwork for a powerful new paradigm in Muskoka. This is history in the making, folks; a must-read manifesto of Muskoka as "Artland." Read Newman Wallis' speech [here](#)

Mr. Wallis' vision is framed around something Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe said in the 18th century: "Dream no small dreams...for they have no power to move the hearts of men."

If you are as fired up upon reading it as we were, talk to us--we at the Arts Council of Muskoka are in the midst of a strategic review, a peer-led review designed to unite the arts, business, government and larger communities. You can find us at info@artscouncilofmuskoka.com or call us at 705.644.0531.

Talk to the leaders of your arts organization, talk to your economic development officer, talk to your elected municipal and district representatives. Share Mr. Wallis' vision, be part of what moves the community forward.

We at the Arts Council do more than push big-picture concepts, by the way. We recommend you participate in our new Arts Directory of Muskoka, a publicly-funded online guide to arts and culture in Muskoka. Your listing is free. Go to www.artsdirectoryofmuskoka.com to get listed.

Vision: To enrich Muskoka through the arts.

Mission: To identify, unite, support, promote and facilitate artists and artistic activity in Muskoka.



Other recent news; We are spearheading an exciting new arts-in-education initiative called Creative Intelligence for the Creative Economy, and we are curating a new arts centre on Manitoba Street Bracebridge called Six Degrees Muskoka, to promote arts groups, artisans and artists of all disciplines across the District. Want to participate in either or both of these? Contact us! 705.645.5225 or info@artscouncilofmuskoka.com

The Arts Council of Muskoka is a non-profit organization that anyone can join dedicated to enriching Muskoka through the arts. We gratefully acknowledges the assistance of our members and supporters, including the Ontario's Ministry of Culture, the Ontario Arts Council, Heritage Canada, and Muskoka Futures.