

I would like to start by thanking Ivan Habel, whose leadership over the past 11 years has been exceptional. Thank you also to our staff, patrons, donors, Board members, and our many partners, whose involvement has made the Belfry such a vital institution.

With all of three months under my belt, it is fascinating to examine the previous year with a degree of distance and objectivity. Michael has given you the details of what we have accomplished, and I can speak to what I see from my specific perspective, with an eye to how the past informs our next steps.

I have come to the Lekwungen speaking nations' territory, via the territory of the Dish with One Spoon wampum. The idea of that treaty is: take only what we need from the dish, keep the dish clean, and leave enough for others. The "others", to my mind, expands to mean the seven generations that will come after us.

The Belfry has proven itself to be a resilient and sustainable institution, but how do we *thrive* moving into the future? How do we respond to change? These last few years have been a time of significant change, brought about not only by the pandemic, but also major social and political movements. Together, they have prompted massive self-reflection in the cultural sector.

In March of this year, the Belfry Board and staff crafted a strategic plan that wisely took into account these significant changes. Later this year, Michael and I will flesh out our operational responses to the ideas contained in the draft plan.

Thanks to government support during the pandemic, the Belfry maintained the cultural infrastructure necessary to survive - and to move forward. Our donors also stepped up in a vote of confidence and faith in our institution. This heartening support allowed us to keep our doors open, retain staff, develop artistic programming, and expand our training programs.

Kudos to our staff, Michael, and Ivan, who swiftly adapted to the practical and psychological pressures created by the pandemic. I am particularly proud that as one of this country's leading cultural institutions, we stepped up and implemented new training and outreach initiatives. And through it all we maintained a strong balance sheet.

We all believe in the Belfry. Our responsibility now is to enhance the relevance, capacity, and resilience of this beloved institution. As together we build the Belfry's future, let us ensure that we truly serve the next seven generations.

I look forward to this challenge.