

## Introducing FAB Arts

The purpose of this message is to introduce you to FAB Arts, a new network of arts-oriented people, organizations and businesses in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere region. You have been contacted because we have learned that you are a member of the creative community or an arts/cultural organization in this region.

### Why a Biosphere arts network?

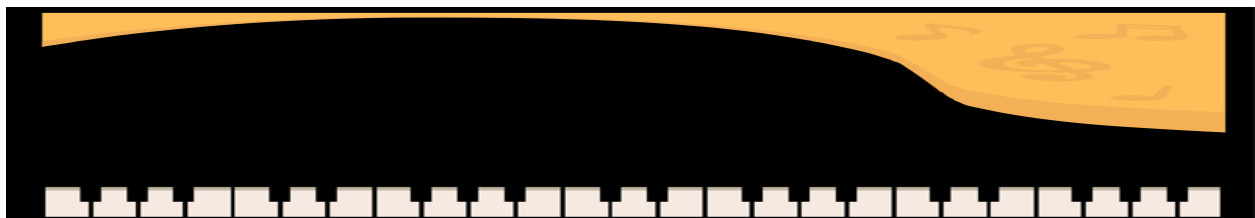
A number of local artists and interested organizations have been involved in preliminary discussions and feel that there are many benefits to a biosphere-wide initiative. **There is a shared sense that we have a distinctive landscape that helps give rise to a unique artistic voice.** There is a view that the area is little-known beyond our borders as a cultural destination. **Many feel that the economic potential of arts-related activities is insufficiently understood and underdeveloped within the FAB region.** We, and others, see the potential for activities that will improve communication within the arts community, build partnerships across our many types of local councils and clubs, and enable us to communicate arts messages to wider potential audiences. Overall there is a sense that the special biosphere region to which we are connected offers a unique way to collaborate on Arch-wide activities that respect sustainability goals while celebrating the region.

### What is a FAB Artist?

Are you inspired by the place in which we live? Does our rugged, ancient landscape stir your soul and move you to express your creativity? We believe that self-identification may be the best way to describe the local art community. What is your artistic identity? Poet? Song-writer? Painter? Actor? Weaver? Or do you work in other Fine Arts/Crafts areas? Do you run a gallery that presents the works of artists from our area? For now, you may wish to simply observe what evolves through FAB Arts to see how the network can be of value to you, or you may wish to pursue a more active role and send us your ideas and/or questions.

### What is the inventory?

At this point our inventory includes over 500 individuals and 50 arts related organizations and businesses. This database is helping us to understand who is arts-involved in our region and what types of artistic activities they pursue. Initially the inventory will be used for communications purposes and to inform our early research.



This information will help us tell the story of the size and needs of our arts community and to develop projects and workshops that benefit our creative local residents. Eventually, the data base may be used to help build a website and an Arts Trail directory – *but not without your permission*. We will respect your confidentiality and will not share or sell the inventory listings. ***If you are not already included in the inventory please click on the FAB Arts & Culture Inventory link on our website.***

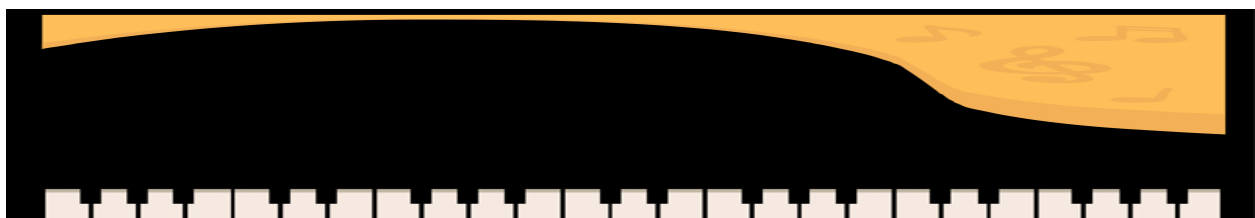
### **What is the economic contribution of our arts community?**

We believe that the contribution of arts to the economic development and sustainability of the Frontenac Arch is not well understood. We think there are supports that can help to nurture a creative cluster of artists and arts-related services in the region. We would like to get a better idea of the economic contribution currently. **You can help us do that by filling out our FAB Arts and Culture Economic Impact Questionnaire at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8TRY2SH>.** This questionnaire is done through SurveyMonkey, a reliable web service that permits us to quickly administer a small (10 question) survey. Because your responses go directly to SurveyMonkey, your information will be completely ***anonymous and confidential***; we will only be provided with the overall rollup of data...which we will share with you by publishing it on the FAB Arts page of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere website. The survey will be quick and easy to complete, and it can help provide us with a preliminary snapshot of the economic impact the arts has on the region. Results may be of interest to government and other possible funders for future initiatives aimed at strengthening the arts community.

### **What's happened so far?**

As a first step the Frontenac Arch Biosphere (FAB) organization brought together a working group of representatives from arts organizations (Rideau Lakes Artists Association, Thousand Islands Artists, Visual Artists of Gananoque and Area, Kingston Arts Council, and individuals involved in music, writing, and theatre). Through facilitated discussions, 5 broad areas of potential activity have been identified: development of an **inventory** of artists, artisans, crafts people, arts organizations, and arts related businesses; development of a **web site** for multiple purposes including a 'Local Arts & Crafts Trail' and marketing portal; **research** to assess the current and potential economic impact of the arts; **standards** that will support sustainable practices and encourage excellence in our arts pursuits; and the possibility of an **arts council** to sustain collaboration.

This message you are reading is intended to broaden awareness of this initiative across the Frontenac Arch. If you know of others who may be interested, please invite them to



add their names to the inventory by completing the data requirements on the FAB Arts section of the website. In the meantime our facilitated discussions will continue. The next stage will be to invite discussion from the wider arts community on a foundation of proposals and ideas in the form of an open workshop.

### **What is the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Region?**

The Frontenac Arch is a geological feature of ancient granite that bridges the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack Mountains – known to aboriginals as *The Bones of the Mother*. The Biosphere goes from the Wolfe Lake area in the northwest, embraces Westport, Sydenham, most of the area south of Highway 42 over to Brockville, then south west along the St. Lawrence to Gananoque, including the Thousand Islands. Have a look at the FAB website to see a more specific map. However, FAB takes an inclusive approach to membership – people and organizations that are near to the Arch area are always welcome.

### **Additional Background:**

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere is an organization that works to network the social, cultural, economic and environmental groups across the Biosphere in order to help guide us towards a more integrated and effective approach to living. To date, FAB has helped to nurture the establishment of groups such as **Local Flavours** (which encourages the production and consumption of locally-produced food) and **Explore the Arch** (which is mapping all of the various trails across the region: hiking, paddling, heritage walking tours and historical driving tours). Presently, FAB is looking closely at the abundance and diversity of artistic practice within the region, and initiating discussions and ideas to help strengthen the arts and culture sector throughout the Frontenac Arch Biosphere. A few individuals and organizational representatives have now begun this conversation with the hope to expand the number of participants connected to the discussion and build an inventory of artists and resources that will benefit the region.

We appreciate the time you took to learn about this FAB arts initiative and we hope you take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire from Survey Monkey when it arrives in your inbox.

