

Dear ,

As a family we were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the “*Christmas on the Bay - Meaford*” event! We enjoy the Christmas season and love to celebrate with family and friends.

We had heard much about *Christmas on the Bay* and seen the glossy marketing and promises of a great time of shopping and community. There was certainly a TON of work put into this and since COVID we have missed the “community Christmas” events and all that they entail. A special thanks to everyone who put so much work into this event and the professionalism and enthusiasm that it produced for our community.

We eagerly rushed through our supper on Friday evening and set out to attend the event (around 7 pm). As we approached the central area for the event, we received a very warm welcome from our neighbour and proceeded to go further into the venue. Almost immediately we stumbled upon a Drag Queen dancing. We were dismayed that such adult entertainment this would be presented to unsuspecting parents and children. Our son asked if we could leave, and we agreed 😞.

After careful reflection and some sleuthing, we realized that “Drag King and Queen” were on Friday’s schedule from 4-7 pm. The impetus for this event was possibly government sponsoring, suggesting that this event that was “diverse and inclusive.” There’s a big difference between inclusivity and sexual content.

Here are some heartfelt thoughts and suggestions from a family that loves this community and people.

If you are looking to cover all areas of diversity, equity and inclusion, that are family friendly, please consider that it involves a wide range of spectrum. Events should be comfortable for everyone – youngest to oldest. We recommend replacing the adult entertainment mentioned above with some Christmas content from many of our rich cultures and ethnicities represented in our area (Ukrainian, Syrian, Dutch, German etc). We would be more than willing to volunteer to research and make that happen for next year if the committee is willing? It would be great to see some ethnic artisan pieces, cultural dances, new cultural ways of Christmas celebrations from our “new” Canadians. I believe that these ideas could appeal to all peoples and be “family friendly” as well.

We would love to see this event a yearly tradition and loved other content presented and the hard work implemented. I believe this event could gain momentum as a family event in years to come.

Let’s keep it family friendly, as we come together to celebrate the importance of Christmas!

Sincerely,

Scott and Mary-Lou. Maclean