



Friends of the Mindemoya Old School

“Building on the past to forge a prosperous, green, creative and inclusive future”
Fall 2024 Newsletter Volume 4, Issue 5

Poppies decorated the Old School for Remembrance Day

Many students who attended this school were later called upon to fight for freedom and democracy. This year local volunteers crocheted and knitted 400 poppies, on display at the Pioneer Museum and at the Old School.



The poppies honour the veterans of World War I, World War II, and more recent wars. To them we owe a great debt. Pictured (left to right) at the Old School are the Central Manitoulin Historical Society curator Mnawaate Corbiere, and members Lorene Martell and Pat Costigan.

SUMMER EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS RECAP

Our fundraising volunteers were busy! Weeks of preparation went into an art auction, a 50-50 raffle, and the Birthday Bash and BBQ on August 10.

We were honoured to have a number of the Island's most senior residents join us for the celebration and many former students gathered for a group photo. Maddie Becks (left) was born in 1921, the same year construction began on the school. Maddie Becks is the daughter of A.J. Wagg, founder of Wagg's Creamery in Mindemoya.



Summer recap continued...

- The **50/50 raffle** was very popular, volunteers sold 1417 tickets! The big winner was announced at the Birthday Bash and BBQ. Donna M. was the lucky winner of **\$3542.50**. The **50/50 Early Bird** Winner, Richard J., took home a cool \$500 on Canada Day. A 50-50 raffle is definitely on our “to-do” list next year.
- The BB & BBQ was also a great spot for people to have one last look at some of the beautiful works of art that were part of our **online auction**. During the summer, the pieces were displayed at the Museum, in Jake’s front window and at Ribfest. A total of \$1525 was raised through the auction. Our thanks to those who donated their art, to all the bidders, and to Brent Forsyth, who handled the auction website.
- Three lucky bidders took home **raffle baskets** packed with goodies.
- Supportive vendors provided a chance to do some early Christmas shopping.
- Coffee, homemade cupcakes and popcorn were available by donation. Children enjoyed a free, fun activity area.
- The day was rainy and cool, However, it was made MUCH brighter by the catchy tunes provided by our own Joanne and Jim Smith on keyboard and saxophone.



Summer Workshops

We may not be able to open the Old School yet, but we collaborated on many successful workshops last summer at the Pioneer Museum. FOMOS collaborated with the Central Manitoulin Historical Society to offer craft classes for all ages, bridge lessons, family tree workshops and painting workshops – all thanks to an amazing group of volunteer instructors, led by Pat Costigan and organized by CMHS’ new Curator, Mnawaate Gordon Corbiere.



Plein air painting with artist Helen Siksek at the Old School



One of many summer workshops, doing embroidery with instructor Emma Miller



Pat Costigan and Nancy Foreman gave lively and informative bridge lessons each week in the summer. We were saddened when Nancy Foreman passed away in September. Our condolences to her family.

Winter seniors' programs In collaboration with Central Manitoulin

We are excited to begin working with the Municipality on a number of workshops and classes for seniors this winter. New winter exercise classes were announced earlier this month as part of our collaboration. The provincial government is expanding their current Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC) program to create more centres. The Municipality has applied for a grant for a new SALC, and FOMOS is part of the application. Since Central Manitoulin doesn't have a seniors centre, we are optimistic that the application will be successful. In the meantime, we are pleased to collaborate with the Municipality on programs this winter. Watch for more news!

A Great Centre for Older Adults

What programs and activities are most popular with seniors? In 2022 we did a survey to find out. The most important ONE wish for a centre was a fun place to get together, a drop-in activity centre and other ideas along the same lines.

The most popular activities were guest speakers (75%), singalongs (72%), followed by a games room (shuffleboard, billiards), cards, physical fitness, chair exercises and dancing, brain fitness, computers, weekly lunches, painting and drawing lessons, and movies. Two-thirds of respondents said they would like a coffee/tea shop.



A Note from the President

Four years seems like a long road for all of us, and I often hear the question “When will the building open?” That depends on when we can find the funds for the retrofits and renovations. Projects like ours – projects that improve seniors’ lives, strengthen culture and point the way to a sustainable future – deserve government support. We are grateful that businesses, foundations and people like you show faith in us with generous donations, but projects this size also need government funding, and so far that has eluded us.

We learn as we go along. We’ve learned that these kinds of projects usually receive municipal funding, which helps unlock funds from provincial and federal governments. Four years ago, we had our sights set on opening the entire building. Now we are looking for funds to open just the main floor – as a start.

The costs are still considerable. Although the building was occupied until 2016, it seems many upgrades are needed to meet current building standards. The roof structure and some beams need to be reinforced. Fire-resistant drywall and extra insulation need to be installed. The barrier-free washroom needs to be enlarged. Some rooms must have new flooring. The heating system is busted. It’s a big job.

Some upgrades will lower the operating costs and showcase green technology. With heat pumps and triple-glazed windows we’ll drastically reduce pollution and slash heating and cooling costs. We are fortunate that Mitsubishi Electric has offered us a deep discount on their cold-climate heat pumps.

Donations to ACO paid for a new roof and other things. We’d like to go ahead with more construction, but there’s a “catch”. Government grants only fund a portion of projects, and they want proof that we can cover the rest. Improvements already made usually don’t count. So it makes more sense to build up our reserves. In other words, at this time we need donations to strengthen our applications for grants. It may be disappointing not to see concrete results right away, but having more funds “in the bank” will boost our chances of success.

So we are asking for your help now. **Donations by December 23 will be matched**, up to a total of \$5,000. Also, as always, donations of \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a plaque and on our website.

With best wishes, *Jan*

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