



FOMOS Digest
November 2021 Volume 1, Issue 5

Boy, Do We Have a Lot to Share!

(Yet another doozy from your editors = once again time to grab a drink and settle in)

Dear Friends,

So much water has run under the Swingbridge since our last newsletter and so we have an embarrassment of news-riches to report on. Most of all, we are thrilled to have proven Margaret Mead's previously mentioned statement correct: A small(ish) number of committed Manitouliners have indeed taken several more successful steps towards saving, perhaps not the world, but at least one of the billions of patches that make up the quilt of its history.

As the deadline for the stay-of-execution drew nearer, the FOMOS Board spent innumerable hours authoring a business plan and presentation, outlining many aspects of our vision and plan for the building. At the September meeting of the Properties Committee, our very own and very awesome Alison again stepped up to the plate and - in stellar fashion - delivered the information to the Properties Committee at a meeting that had a phenomenal turnout of FOMOS supporters. Alison fielded many detailed questions with great aplomb and as you probably know, we walked away from that meeting with a recommendation to Council that an extension be granted until next April.

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TOP STORIES

FOMOS WILL BE AT JD'S CHRISTMAS MARKET (rumour has it that

our hotcakes will sell like ... well, hotcakes.)

On November 27, 10 - 4 and 28, 10 - 2 at JD's, 231 Sideroad 10, just south of Tehkummah FOMOS will be selling Old School Memorabilia, like the very popular Old School mugs - seasonally useful for nog, cloth bags, and other Christmas gift items. Equally important, to some perhaps even more so, we'll also have home baked goods. Jim and Joanne Smith will accept donations of your favorite baked goods (Yumm!) on Friday November 26 to take to the market. For more details call Jan at 705-377-4045.

IT TRULY WAS THE CENTENNIAL OF THE CENTURY!

(much party-hardy went on)

After Piper Paul MacDonald opened the occasion with bagpipe music in traditional style, Master of Ceremonies Norm Morrell, a former principal at the school, added his own memories and put saving the school into perspective by noting that our century-old school is a mere baby when compared to buildings in Europe and elsewhere, where anything less than 200 or 300 years old is considered barely middle-aged. The afternoon was punctuated with invigorating and dancing-worthy performances by Missy's Groovy Little Band, the Manitoulin Swing Band and the Dewar Boys. We had a strong showing of politicians with MP Carol Hughes, MPP Mike Mantha, and Mayor Richard Stephens all joining us to celebrate this momentous occasion.

MP Carol Hughes encapsulated the hopes of everyone attending, saying, "It is all about



100th birthday bash with Master of Ceremonies Norm Morrell

conserving the school and making it into something that will be well received and used by members of the community. Linda Kelly, representing the Ontario Historical Society (OHS), thanked FOMOS for their hard work and dedication to preserving the school.

Guests from as far away as Kingston and centenarian Maddie Becks made the event even more special.

We are grateful that so many of you gave generously of your time and resources to make this day so special and for the Expositor's [coverage of the bash](#).

THREE VISIONS FOR THE SCHOOL (the view from here is pretty awesome!)

After the wonderful birthday bash, we got down to business. Our Treasurer, Alison McAllister, presented our Business Plan to the Property Committee, showing them how serious FOMOS is about taking over the building, retrofitting it and creating a vibrant hub for the community.

The lower level of the Old School can be a seniors' dream come true. Many seniors feel isolated and disconnected from their peers, even more so over the past 18 months of the pandemic. Seniors need space to socialize, make crafts, enjoy games and entertainment, make music, and learn new skills – you name it! Kitchen facilities are a “must”. Cultural events and displays will also highlight historical and natural history, with special attention to the history of the Old School itself.

Alison presented three visions for the main level: 1. an artists' hub with art studios, galleries and market-type operations; 2. low-income senior's housing apartments; 3. a single educational or cultural tenant.

A projected budget of \$1.5 million was developed for all the renovations that would be required for the artists' hub and seniors' centre. At least 20 rental units can be created on the main floor, where artists can rent space for studios or stores they staff themselves, or participate in defined spaces for products to be displayed, with shared customer service. The artists' hub would strengthen Mindemoya's attractiveness as a tourist destination, as well as providing a central location for artists to create and sell their products.

A Lease, Please!!:

We're making progress! Granting agencies will only give capital grants for building refurbishments to not-for-profit organizations that either own the building or have a long-term lease. It makes sense! They have a responsibility to fund projects with the best chance of success. But of course, FOMOS doesn't own the Old School. To break the logjam and allow our funding applications to be considered by the funding agencies, Council has directed Municipal staff “to create a contract document for the conditional lease of the Mindemoya Old School building between the municipality and FOMOS”. FOMOS will have to secure funding for the lease to be activated. Stay tuned...

UPCOMING AGM: BROAD SUPPORT FOR OLD SCHOOL

Almost 300 supporters have joined FOMOS. Thank-you! And thanks to our volunteers who spread the word and held public events to help grow our membership. Memberships are a tangible way to demonstrate the Old School has broad support.

The memberships we set up were annual with renewals every January. This could be off-putting for those who joined part-way through the year. It is also time-consuming for our hard-working volunteers. Some organizations have set up simpler systems, where memberships are lifetime. No more annual fees and renewals! That is, members remain members as the “default”, and only need to take action if they wish to drop their membership for whatever reason. The FOMOS Directors will present a proposal for lifetime

memberships at the next Annual General Meeting. It's a "Keep It Simple" Solution that will reduce our volunteers' workloads, and we can all concentrate on saving the school.

INTRODUCING KAREN MACKENZIE FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To many of you, Karen MacKenzie (nee Cooper) needs no introduction. One of our most industrious volunteers and an organizing dynamo, she worked on the FOMOS Fundraising/Membership Committee from the beginning. Karen has agreed to be nominated to the Board at the next AGM, and in the meantime she is also filling the role of Recording Secretary at our Board meetings. Many thanks to Karen!

A 4th generation Haweater, Karen was born and raised in Mindemoya. She attended the Mindemoya Old School and has fond memories of her years there in the early 1960's. Now she summers with her family on Lake Mindemoya. Any first time guests visiting her Manitoulin family summer home are treated to a local tour which always includes the stately Mindemoya Old School! Karen was on the Board of Directors of the Villages of Brantwell in Burlington, a condo community of 282 units, where she resides while not on Manitoulin. In addition, she was Chair of the Social Committee and Co-Chair of the Clubhouse Committee in that community, all spanning over 10 years.

ODDS & SODS

- A FOMOS membership or one of our other small gift items make great stocking-stuffers

As always, we encourage you to reach out to us if you have any questions or suggestions or if you would like to volunteer and/or become a member.

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)



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