

Greetings and holiday tidings from your Friends of the Story Mansion! Your board members (President, Felix Spinelli; Secretary and Treasurer, Michele Soldner; Laurie Neil; Jane Klockman; Elizabeth Darrow; Lee Wagner; Paula Power; Julie Seitel; and Kari Doll) have been busy on many fronts. We continue to be supported by Dr. Eric Van Steenberg (MSU) and Jamie Saitta, Program Manager for City of Bozeman Parks and Recreation Department, in our progress toward making events come alive at the Mansion and planning for the future.

As always, it seems the year passes in a whirlwind, especially 2021 as we held our breath collectively and worked to get ourselves back into gear after the onset of the pandemic. In May, the board was able to finally meet again in person after a year of ZOOM! And, despite some restrictions still being in place due to Covid19, FOSM managed to hold outdoor events and accomplish much this past year. We are eager to share with you this quick review.

Over the past 12 months, the board has focused on three major themes identified in the first quarter of the year: what future directions do we need to make in marketing and promotion; what efforts should we pursue in community outreach; and how to better define the Mansion's niche in our community. We believe we have made headway on all fronts.

In marketing and promotion, board member Paula Power stepped up efforts to be more visible on social media and marketing events in local publications and news outlets and developed a MailChimp mailing list for sending quarterly reports and event announcements. New board member Julie Seitel honed in on community outreach, creating promotional materials about recent events and distributing mailings throughout downtown and nearby neighborhoods. We all worked to invite new volunteers to join us for gardening days and mansion events and had some success in having people from the community show up to help.

The Board has worked to better communicate with neighbors and the public about events and opportunities to be involved at the mansion. With masks and limited numbers, we have been able to open the mansion for tours again and Julie, board president Felix Spinelli and neighbor Bill Scharnberg have each guided individuals and even young students from nearby schools through the mansion, answering questions and giving a little history lesson about when and how the mansion was built.

In partnership with the City of Bozeman Parks and Recreation Department, we feel we are better defining the mansion's place in our community. In the second quarter, after being approached by various groups interested in renting or renovating the structure, a proposal led by Paula, and with much help from Julie, was reworked with the idea of making re-use of the Carriage House a priority in the development plan for the mansion. As the first of three phases of a possible fundraising and development plan for the mansion, this proposal centers on the hopes that the Carriage House can become a much-needed community theater/gathering place. The board met with City leaders and a proposal of ideas was discussed with the City Manager to identify next steps needed by the City and FOSM to generate movement in renovation and re-use plans for the Carriage House. In time, we hope the second and third floors of the mansion also find a niche in a re-use to make this property a truly enhanced community center.

Also in the second quarter, FOSM was extremely successful in our second-ever Give Big campaign and we continue to look at more ways to generate funds for renovating and reusing the mansion.

In the third quarter, several FOSM board members and others were involved in another gardening day with special emphasis on the Mansion's windows and exterior shrubbery. Felix, Laurie, Julie, and FOSM friend and neighbor, Bill Scharnberg, again gave several mansion tours. These tours were arranged via our webpage and because of the Mansion hosting one of the three SLAM events held in August. These tours generated over \$100 in donations, but more importantly, indicated a great interest in the mansion's place in Bozeman history. In so doing, it solidifies the Mansion as a landmark of the community and connects many past SAE members and longtime Bozeman residents to the current board and their hopes for the future.

Most exciting in the third quarter, was the publication by the City of a Request for Proposal (RFP) related to the re-use of the Carriage House, centering on the idea of it becoming a community theater/gathering place. Plans for this re-use and possible renovation of the Carriage House are moving forward, although many challenges lay ahead for this "Phrase One" re-use proposal to be realized.

After last year's cancellation, the FOSM and Bozeman Parks and Rec resumed the Story Under the Stars (SUTS) outdoor film event, again collaborating with the Bozeman Film Society (BFS). FOSM board members, Julie and Kari, took a lead role in working with Lisa McGrory (BFS) in making this event another successful collaboration effort. This year's film selection was "Raiders of the Lost Ark" with live snakes and bugs to boot and was enjoyed by all!

Despite The Virus still lurking, our Fourth Quarter proved to be especially active and exciting! During this time, Felix and Julie continued to provide tours upon request. A visit by fifteen 8th grade students and four teachers from the Willson Alternative School was a highlight of Felix's mansion tours, with the students asking good questions, i.e., did Native Americans live here before this building was built, how much did it cost, did children live here, etc. The board agreed that going forward volunteers or board members will provide regularly scheduled tours from noon to two on the first Sunday of every month.

Two major landmark community-oriented extravaganzas occurred this quarter: the annual "Witches Night at the Mansion" and "The Story Mansion Winter Festival", a new idea launched for outdoor entertainment during the pandemic.

Witches Night saw hundreds of youngsters trick-or-treating on the lawn where robotic witches and scary props provided entertainment. Julie brought the mansion some added spookiness with her lighting and special effects skills! What a great addition she has been to our board! Over \$180 of candy (about 55 pounds) was distributed by our trusted witches to over 300 happy children. Former FOSM board member, Jerry Coffey, and members of the Sigma Chi fraternity handled the street crossing duties with an assist from the Longfellow School who lent us stop sign paddles and reflective vests. According to Jerry, the light effects surpassed any previous Halloween lighting display.

On December 3, many members of the FOSM board along with several volunteers sprang into action to decorate the Mansion. The following day, Julie, Paula, Felix and Felix's wife Maggie, represented the FOSM at Bozeman's Christmas Stroll making many contacts in the community and distributing flyers (made by Julie) of the Holiday Event, which were also mailed to over 630 residents living in proximity of the mansion.

On December 5, a truly wonderful Holiday Festival came together with lots of cookies made by volunteers, gallons of hot chocolate (with the help of Jane's daughter hot chocolate machine), fantastic

entertainment, kids' crafts and cookie decorating, and of course, snow and cold temperatures (after hitting record high temperatures the previous week).

While everyone loves the Victorian Tea, it had to be cancelled because we don't currently feel safe holding indoor events. But this new outdoor holiday festival was a neighborhood hit with Julie again working her magic and providing several groups who performed on a snowy stage set up outside: Verge Teen Theater, Circque406, The Last Best Comedy, and Random Acts of Silliness provided top-notch pop-up entertainment. We even had a spontaneous quartet of young people stop by -- "Things with Strings" -- to serenade us with Christmas music. Paula and Laurie helped with kids crafting and cookie decorating (with the help of several volunteers), and volunteers brought a bounty of homemade cookies to be enjoyed with hot chocolate. It was truly a fun event! A silent auction of donated items brought in over \$800 and another \$100 or so was collected in donation jars.

The plan next year is to hold both events, the Victorian Tea in November and the Story Mansion Winter Festival in December. Yay!

While all this activity was occurring this quarter, the board has met and continues to work on future events and activities. Your board continues to be hopeful concerning the proposal for the Carriage House reuse and is working closely with the City on "next steps". The FOSM board anticipates an exciting re-use for this facility.

We are excited about the number of new volunteers who showed up throughout this past year to help at events and gardening days. Remember, the Story Mansion is YOUR mansion. As your board, we will be working to fundraise and come up with new ideas for community involvement at the mansion, but we welcome new ideas from community members about events they would like to see. Come volunteer for an event -- we welcome your contributions!

FOSM in partnership with the City of Bozeman Parks and Recreation Department looks forward to an exciting 2022 and we invite you to come share in our enthusiasm and excitement about the mansion by volunteering! Please visit our webpage and the City's Parks and Recreation webpage to see how you can become involved and feel free to contact board members at any time via email at storymansionfriends@gmail.com or through our web page.

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