

School reunion donates money to South Algonquin schools



By Mike Riley

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A South Algonquin students' reunion, which included former pupils from several schools in Whitney and Sabine from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s took place on June 25. Not only was the reunion a big success, but due to a philanthropic gesture from the supplier to the catering company for the event, the reunion was able to donate its proceeds, over \$1,700, to two local schools; Whitney Public School and St. Martin of Tours Catholic School.

The school reunion happened on June 25 at the Lester B. Smith Community Centre from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. It included students from the Whitney and Sabine schools from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. There was a \$5 per person cover charge and the event included a buffet, non-alcoholic drinks, door prizes, a raffle and live music. The organizers for the event were former students Janet (Shields) Tenthorey, Dorothy (Murdock) Anderson, Elaine (Fuller) Szczygiel and Maureen (Ronholm) Lucasavitch.

On June 29, two of the reunion's organizers, Szczygiel and Shields, came by Whitney Public School and St. Martin of Tours Catholic School to donate the proceeds from their event. There were two cheques, one for each school, in the amount of \$894.50 (for a total of \$1789) that they handed off to Whitney Public School principal Jonathan Pratt, St. Martin of Tours Catholic School vice principal Tara McEnery, school secretary and supply teacher Marta Walczak and Holly Hayes, who is on the parents' council at the school.

Szczygiel said that they thought they'd have expenses for the reunion on June 25, but they didn't as everything was donated by the supplier to the catering company, George Henry Catering Co. The supplier wished to remain anonymous.

"So, we ended up with some money and we thought the two schools were the most appropriate place to get that money," she says.

When the school officials asked if Szczygiel and Shields had any ideas how the money should be used, they said they didn't really. They left it to the schools' discretion on how they best saw fit to distribute the funds to help out the students and the schools. While the decision will be made in the fall, it is likely that the money will be used for the schools' snack program and school trips when the new school year starts up in September.

Szczygiel and Shields said that the reunion went really well and they couldn't have asked for it to be better. They even joked that some attendees were asking when the next one was! They said they had one couple come up from Texas, another lady came up from

Rochester, N.Y. and the rest came from all across southern and central Ontario. Overall, they had 130 people attend. The only drawback, according to Szczygiel, was that the reunion just wasn't long enough.

?I didn't get to visit with anybody, because I was too busy,? she says.

Anderson, another one of the organizers, told Bancroft This Week in an email on July 4 that the live music was provided by some local talented musicians which everyone enjoyed.

?Raffles on gift certificates for meals at local lodges, hockey jersey, hand crafted bowl, various books on Algonquin Park and paintings were a few of the generously donated items. Cold buffet was served at 3 p.m. and everyone went home happy to have met up with old friends and schoolmates they hadn't seen in years,? she says. ?An overall great success.