

Chair's Report to the QMS Society – AGM November 7, 2009

2008 – 2009 has been another successful year at Queen Margaret's School and has been highlighted by the recent openings of two new buildings.

Rowantree Hall, our new Science and Technology Centre was opened just a few weeks ago. I just love this building – it is not only architecturally a striking building but it also has a warm and comfortable feeling to it. As I mentioned at the opening ceremony, I believe we now have our 'signature' building which will be used both in marketing and to define what we are at Queen Margaret's in the future.

And sometimes you have to be lucky to be good. As Shirley Burr stated at our recent Equestrian Centre Opening, Mother Nature certainly lent a helping hand in making it all possible. The Equestrian Centre was officially opened earlier this week and I urge any of you who have not yet seen it to do so soon. It's a marvellous facility.

Last year at this time I raised a couple of concerns in my report to you. The first concern was the pending downturn in the economy. I am pleased to report that we are coping with the downturn and have forecast a small surplus in this year's budget. Our borrowing position is also very solid as we currently project borrowings of approximately \$2 million out of our authorized limit of \$3.8 million. One small benefit to the downturn has been that interest rates are very low so that interest expense on borrowing has been less than forecast. The second concern was maintaining momentum at QMS. However, during the past year we opened an extra new building, the Equestrian Centre, we have managed to maintain a balanced budget and just in the past few weeks received a significant donation to push our Capital Campaign over the \$800,000 mark. So, I believe we have maintained our momentum – even under these difficult circumstances.

Before moving on to thanking a few people I want to say a few words about Larry Peltier who passed away recently. Larry and I served on the Board of Governors together for two years. Larry was outspoken, he always had an opinion, but always had the best interest of the school at heart. I don't think I know of any man who was more passionate about QMS than Larry. We will miss him.

I want to say Thank You to my fellow Governors. I have been on the Board for seven years and have enjoyed the experience. Part of that enjoyment comes from working with a Board of Governors who bring their individual backgrounds and talents to the fore and commit them to helping QMS. Thank you for all your hard work over the past year.

Secondly I want to give a special thanks to Dar Howes. Dar's job description actually reads as Executive Assistant to the Head of School, but really it should include the Board of Governors as well. Dar attends all of our Board Meetings, provides a tremendous amount of information and structure for the Board and generally serves as a point of contact for Governors. Thanks for all you do Dar.

My next Thank You is kind of sad in a way. As you know our Head of School, Pat Rowantree is in her last year with the school and this will be her last AGM as Head of School. It's hard to imagine that Queen Margaret's could have had a better person to be the Head over the past five years. I mentioned a couple of years ago that it almost seemed like destiny that Pat arrived at QMS with decades of experience, her multitude of extraordinary leadership qualities and at a time in her career that was suited perfectly for Queen Margaret's School. That Pat is a builder is obvious. I think her nickname should be 'Bob the Builder'. This was confirmed to me earlier this morning when I noticed a hard hat in her office during a committee meeting. But Pat has added so much more to our school. She has the ability to make staff and associates be their best. She's developed a sense of teamwork and collaboration at QMS. She's introduced new programs and the Lighthouse School concept. In general, she's done all the things that have made Queen Margaret's the School it is today – a School that we can all be proud to be associated with. Thank you Pat for all you've done for Queen Margaret's School.

The Board and I look forward to continued successes at QMS in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted
Mike DeBeck, Board Chair