

## An Old St. Francis School Primer

Cead Mille Failte! A thousand welcomes await you at the renovated Old St. Francis School in Bend. Opened in 1936, the School was the first parochial school established in Central Oregon. Now, in November 2004, the School is reborn as the first McMenamins east of the Cascades. One can feel a surge of new life here. The past, though, emits a lively presence, with the personalities and experiences of 64 years of students, teachers, priests and parishioners echoing throughout the property. All of this remarkable history hangs on the framework of the school's evolution dating back to 1910 and extending to the present day, and beyond. This framework is sketched out below as a primer for understanding the renovated school's past.

The St. Francis School was the realization of a long-held dream of parish priest Father Luke Sheehan. Father Luke, who hailed from County Cork, Ireland, came to Bend in 1910 as part of an Irish Catholic mission to the "wilds" of Oregon. Father Luke established and cultivated the St. Francis parish, in large part by trekking hundreds of miles on horseback or on foot, to meet with those first, widely dispersed parishioners. Among this pious group were many of the priest's countrymen, Irish immigrants who had converged upon the high desert mostly to work as shepherders.

All of the groundwork done by Father Luke laid a solid foundation allowing for the school's construction, which ironically came during the economically disastrous time of the Great Depression. The original school building contained four classrooms, with grades one through eight paired two to a room. That first year, there were 145 students enrolled. In years to come, that number soared to more than 300. To accommodate enrollment increases, additions were made to the school in the 1950s and '60s. The first add-on of two classrooms was done in 1953. Seven years later, four more rooms were constructed. Then, in 1968, a spacious new parish center was built

# McMenamins OLD ST. FRANCIS SCHOOL'S Walking Tour

along the school's north side to house a gym, stage, meeting rooms and cafeteria.

By all accounts, the nuns who taught at St. Francis, all of whom were of the Sisters of the Holy Names order from Marylhurst University campus south of Portland, were effective teachers; many were taskmasters, and most had a big heart (though some chose not to wear it on their sleeve). Former students seem united in the opinion that upon entering the public high school in Bend, they stood about a year ahead of their public school peers academically. Socially, however, St. Francis kids felt a little delayed—a deficit that some chose to erase in record time.

Beginning in the late 1960s, change was afoot. Student uniforms were no longer required and lay teachers began to fill the roster at St. Francis School, and the remaining nuns no longer wore habits. But while the formal look of the faculty and student body was relaxed, the focus on quality education remained constant.

In 2000, the St. Francis School relocated to a newly constructed modern campus on the northeastern section of the city. The old downtown property, which now included four old bungalow houses on the back end of the lot, passed to McMenamins. Following a detailed renovation that infused creative and in some cases unconventional elements into the place, the Old St. Francis School was reborn with a respectful celebration of its past and newfound sense of fun.

Within the walls of this old school you'll find a collection of original art based on stories surrounding St. Francis School sharing space with historical photos paying tribute to the property's Catholic beginnings. But you'll also find an eclectic gallery of African, Indonesian, Japanese, Celtic and Episcopalian art and references, as well as numerous one-of-a-kind items. A talented group of artisans—a core of McMenamins veterans and some from Bend—contributed to the remarkable craftsmanship that makes this property stand out.

This walking tour highlights some of the more interesting items, but by no means describes everything. From hand-painted Celtic borders and metal spheres down to the one-of-a-kind headboards in the lodging rooms, this place is overflowing with inspiration. While walking around, enjoy a drink, be sure to keep a keen eye out for all of the out-of-the-ordinary details not talked about here, and most of all, enjoy yourself immensely!

Pub Entryway: The ship's mast-like figurehead character over the door is Lyle Hehn's portrait of the ubiquitous Ruby, a favorite McMenamins icon and namesake of the tasty Ruby Ale. Flanked by two giant cast iron flame sconces that cling to the masonry, she looks out over the patio that separates itself from the sidewalk with unique ironwork fencing.

Inside the Pub: At the base of the stairs is an intricate wood carved relief panel with inlaid brass. The panel depicts a hunt, food preparation and a celebration.

The copper-top bar anchors the place and channels its magic through the large skylight that opens to the heavens. Just descended is the monolithic wood carving of a chariot found atop the bar. The unique piece took 25 years to carve and tells the story of Mahabharata. Check the framed description on the bar for more information about this truly unique piece. Throughout the pub are interesting and fun light fixtures ranging from the smaller orange

and cream "drinking lights", to the large 10-light candelabrum chandelier.

Elevated above the floor is the prominent "Oak Cannon Favorite" wood burning stove. The cast iron behemoth was originally coal-burning, and is number 36198.

Dave Schlicker produced two stunning stained-glass and painted windows for the pub. One depicts St. Francis of Assisi with an owl and wolf. The other is a portrait of Father Luke Sheehan, the school's founder.

Three backlit leaded and stained-glass horizontal windows decorate the north wall. Together with the symmetrical, floral pattern etched windows just around the corner, they separate the kitchen from the pub.

Smoke Room: Pass by the decorative "smoke room" etched glass and feast your eyes on Francisco Cristich "Feast of St. Francis." This local artist honors the school's annual celebration of letting loose monarch butterflies in tribute to St. Francis. The next painting shows Klondike Kate, Flame of the Yukon. Done by another local artist, it shows Kate on a blueprint backdrop of scenes from the old west. Splitting these two is an old English meat market hanger. On top are butcher's tools arranged in the likeness of a bull!

Before leaving the pub, take note of the warm heart-pine wood found throughout this building and the lodging rooms. All of it is salvaged from an old warehouse at the Jim Beam distillery in Kentucky.

Lodging Wing Hallway: This hallway contains a number of great panels from Northwest artists. They include Lyle Hehn's imaginative Easter scene in front of the school, with a white stag and former 'Queen of Hunting Season', and his surreal "Christmas Dream", which features twin Santas buzzing the annual sack-pinata-quiz race. "Greetings from Bend" is done in an old post card fashion, and Olivia

Behm's piece shows the famous Ruby in the classroom on Valentine's Day. Finally, astronauts visit the old Museum of Wonders in Jenny Joyce's playful scene of a strange encounter outside of Bend, referencing the Apollo lunar training that took place outside of Bend in the late '60s.

The hallway also houses a number of interesting and historic photos. Father Dominic O'Connor, a former Bend priest and national hero of Ireland, is the prominent figure mid-hall, with photos showing him in a WWI chaplain uniform, strolling the streets of Ireland, and even the ceremonial return of his remains to County Cork, almost 30 years after his death in Bend! Of course there are others too. Check out the 1947 Washington Redskins photo along with the Greenbay Packers. Don Deeks, pictured in both photos, is Mike and Brian McMenamins' uncle.

Look up! Two skylights here are decorated by Francisco Cristich. One pays tribute to the Irish roots of the parish and depicts the Yeats, sons of Ireland, folklore, poets and writers, and Celtic art. The other is a collage of the elements: earth, fire, water, air.

Just outside the hallway, on the building's east wall, are two tile collages—a project overseen by Donna Lutzsky, current art teacher at the new St. Francis School. The tiles, done by students there, include images of Father Luke and St. Francis. The Ironwork silhouettes over the collages were done by Joe Elliott.

The Courtyard: Circle around to the left (West) and follow the path between the Old School and Parish Center. Hidden amongst the landscaping are a number of gems. The prominent wrought iron arches found here and throughout the property were created by Architectural Ironworks. Check out that inventive cedar fence bordering the property—all of our craftsman are free to be as creative as they like! Midway is an old coat-of-arms, urging you to move ever forward. At the far

end of this path are two pinecone-capped iron posts.

Parish Center Outside Entry: Take a moment here to notice the inspired king's head above the door. He's smiling because through these doors lies his kingdom of fun. Above him is an interesting piece of ironwork and painted metal balls done by Architectural Ironworks and McMenamins staff artists.

Parish Center Entryway: Sharing space with the stylish light fixtures and painted borders is Jenny Joyce's campfire gathering. Here, a Monk tells a story under the moonlight while enjoying some coffee. Even the wolf seems to enjoy what he is speaking of!

The Fireside Bar: This former Knights of Columbus meeting space is truly a great spot to pass the time. Framing the dominant fireplace is a large iron mantle with an oddly modern geometric pattern. The mantle is a set with the considerably sizeable andirons. Art on the walls here include 4 panels of traditional Indonesian folk art. Although largely a Muslim country, the reverse painting on glass exhibits the rich Hindu traditions that date back centuries. Typical of the style, virtually all of the space is filled and probably represents a Hindu celebration such as a wedding.

The Turkish Bath: The crown-jewel of McMenamins soaking pools, it could take a whole day in here to see its wonders. The Sun and Moon stained glass windows high above the bath were created by master-craftsman David Shlicker. Schlicker also produced the unique light fixtures in this room. The movement of water is ever present with the fountain and spouting lions. Hundreds of custom, hand-glazed tiles line the pool, and 4 massive murals take up the wall space. Justyn Livingston's beautiful tile work, done in a Byzantine style—with some Celtic touches—is based on St. Francis' life and his compassion for animals.

The Parish Center Hallway: While in transit, pause to look at the gallery here. This is a great assemblage of historic photos, Indonesian panels and McMenamins posters advertising past events. Have some fun here, we did!

The Rambler Room: Named for the first car the nuns ever owned, a 1968 Rambler Ambassador, this meeting room is filled with amusing items to look at. The paintings that share space with the many photos here are Jenny Joyce's flying nuns, swooping in for a picnic, and Olivia Behm's fanciful depiction of Father O'Riordan and one of the Sisters from the school driving the Rambler past the Museum of Wonders. The Museum still stands—now as a beauty salon—on old Highway 97, just north of downtown.

The Father Luke Room: This large room is a microcosm of the whole property. Here you'll find historic photos, original paintings and one-of-a-kind light fixtures mixed with European signs, African, Indonesian and Japanese pieces, yet somehow it all works together. Jenny Joyce has two offerings in this room, both framed by interesting Indonesian woodwork. The first is her panel showing a lit-up Hippodrome, which stood for years on Wall St. across from the school, attracting a crowd of all ages, dressed up for the Saturday night dancing. The second is a tribute to Father Luke, featuring four vignettes—the school, church, the Sisters, and Father Luke's confrontation with the KKK. This 1920s meeting with the Klan, in which Father Luke called for a peace, is thought to have been a turning point in the Klan's harassment of area Catholics. Olivia Behm's piece portrays the nuns playing baseball, with Father Luke—a huge baseball fan—smiling down from the heavens. The paintings share this vast space with 4 hand made, iron light fixtures. The room also includes the unmistakable wood, leather and iron Taiko drum, hammered bronze gong, and the remarkable, deep-relief elephant tusks.

The Theater: Take a moment to look at the

light fixtures in this room. Each one is a unique creation by Wolfgang Forge in Vernonia, Oregon and the creative minds at Hippo Hardware in Portland. Their elemental and organic designs appear almost alive against the "Olympic Club Red" paint that coats the ceiling. This is the first time McMenamins has commissioned unique fixtures such as these, and we think their scale, look and feel (don't you want to touch them?) are astonishing.

O'Kane's: This is another spot that could take you all day to appreciate. The building is itself a work of art created by our craftsman. The former one-car garage is now reborn as Hugh O'Kane's, his colorful story retold in Jenny Joyce's panel. The little building is capped by a one-ton cartouche salvaged from the Capitol Theater in Salem, and includes a 1896 Round Oak stove, numerous stained glass windows and 3 sets of church doors, one of which dates back to before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The back bar, with its 2 horseshoes and stained glass would appear to have quite a storied past, and the bar itself is from an Indonesian side table. The rare Povey stained-glass windows are from an Elks Lodge in Portland. 100-years ago, the Povey Glass workshop was considered the finest in the Northwest, and we are lucky to have a set. The clock depicted one of the windows shows 11, a designated time of silence to pay homage to fellow fallen Elks. There are 3 English leaded windows that are definitely worth a look, and the torch stained glass on the north side originated in Centralia, home of McMenamins Olympic Club. On the back side of O'Kane's, plaster Celtic crosses break up the edifice. Phew!

The Bungalows: St. Francis began buying the four bungalows during the 1960s. The houses were used for a variety of school and parish purposes. Now group lodging, we've named three of them for the schools pillars: The Parish House, The Nunnery, The Friary. The fourth house, The Art House, was used by the school as an art classroom.