

Heather Houzenga

Upon the completion of the newly restored Kraft building in 2010, after suffering debilitating fire damage, a local writer (Mick Parsons) and a local artist (myself) put their heads together to create something almost unheard of at the time for the community of Mount Carroll (or the County of Carroll for that matter).

From their musings, 5 Minutes of Fame on Market & Main (5MoF) open mic was born, a little over six years ago (seventy seven months to be exact).

Their intention was to create a family friendly, safe and truly open forum for expression, as it was also understood that there was an underserved, almost hidden group of talented artists, writers and musicians residing in the area.

They wanted a place where people could come together, to perform or simply observe, where dancers, artists and writers could share their talent, be appreciated for their gift and grow, for they understood that that is the true foundation of a strong community, the coming together. Since 5MoF's inception, it has seen two different locations, two different nights of the month and two different hosts. But, the community persisted to keep it alive.

Though, many other community related activities began to spread their seeds and take root, including other musically inclined open mics, artisan markets, arts fundraising and a newly established Arts Endowment through the Mount Carroll Community Foundation, 5MoF remained true to its intent: to provide a safe place of expression.

It's bittersweet, but understood that some good things must come to an end, so that further growth can happen in our community.

A final 5MoF open mic performance will be held on Wednesday, June 21 at 6pm at the Mount Carroll Lutheran Church.

A special thanks to these fine folks for their continual support in helping to keep the dream alive: Dr. Schroeder, Ed Leipus, Jeff Kromer, the late Ray Rose and Lou Schau, Carol Gloor, Fay Ellen, Dave Cuckler, Ray-Jay and Will Mueller.

The seeds have been spread, now it's up to the community to keep them alive and prospering.