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# CONDO

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# The Schoolhouse Condominium begins its 15 year tune-up

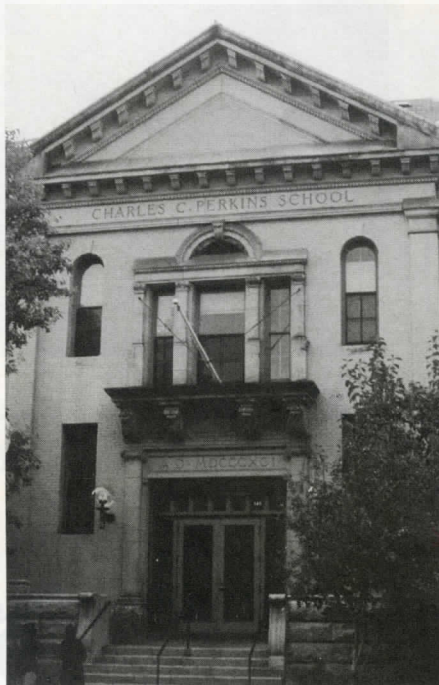
BY BOB BIEDERMAN

Deborah Cooper has been on the Board of Managers at The Schoolhouse Condominium in Boston for eight years. She's been President for the last three. "It's time to let some of our other residents take over. I've had some good times and learned a lot about running a small community. I've had some great partners on the Board along the way, but now it's time to let some of our other 21 owners take their turn. We've got several major projects coming up and we'll need a lot of help and input making decisions about them."

The Schoolhouse is one of Boston's more celebrated condominium conversions. It was one of the first condominium projects undertaken by world famous architect Graham Gund, a transplanted Buckeye from Ohio who has made his home in Boston. His signature style bold contemporary design is more evident on the interior of the building where color and structure of the common area stairwells add a whimsical brightness that opens up what could have been a closed-in dark space. Having Gund's imprimatur on this building certainly adds value and style.

The Schoolhouse had been totally self-managed since its inception. After 17 years, the Board felt that now might be the right time to call in some professional property management help. They chose Boston Realty Works, Inc. to work with them.

"We anticipate some major refurbishment over the next year or two," explains Cooper. "We have always had a very competent Board of Managers with individuals knowledgeable in finance and the other important areas of running a community. But this building is 110 years old and we're ready to do the kind of periodic refurbishment that goes along with maintaining our property values. Although we have been prudent in



establishing a healthy Reserve Fund, we are not expert in selecting all the qualified tradespeople we will need. That's why we felt it was time to work with professional management."

The small condominium community always faces special challenges when it comes to getting work done by professionals. The costs for professional management are often the same whether there are 20 units or 75. The problem is that the cost is shared amongst fewer folks and therefore more expensive. The temptation is to try and do it yourself. With a building of this caliber, that would be a foolish choice. The 21 unit owners at The Schoolhouse opted for the right help at the right time.

Jeff Birenbaum from Boston Realty Works will be working with Robert Weintraub to make sure this community gets the right kind support and guidance as they face the challenge of maintaining a structure more than a century old.

## CONDO MANAGEMENT

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