

I've been following the stories on Madison Project in Toronto and the parallel efforts to save Estonian House for some time now. It's like we have not learned anything from growing up in a community that used to work together for common objective. Yes our elders had their disagreements but look at what they achieved to keep our culture alive; Seedrioru, Joekaaru, Kotkajarve to name but a few. It seems that Estonians (in the West) today have a propensity to do whatever it takes to stop progress and live in the past. As much as I have enjoyed the Broadview Avenue Estonian House and all it has done to preserve Eestlus, it is an edifice and mindset that represents a pagulas history. And yet a large sector of the Eesti community seem to want to continue living in the past. And the language of this discussion is at times so silly and bizarre it makes me roll my eyes. It's time to take a risk folks and project this community into the 21st century. Yes I agree, the Madison Project is rife with unanswered questions and potentially crippling roadblocks. But to comfortably sit on our past achievements is to deny the future. Look at Eesti today folks. Do you think our homeland got to be the envy of Europe by living in the past and obsequiously caving in to potential and real threat from the big bear on its border? No. They have even at times thumbed their nose at Putin and his cronies and barged ahead because they know that those who live in the past are condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past. We should emulate homeland Estos and take example from their incredible risk taking achievements. Estos invented Skype! The present day fibre optic infrastructure project for the entire country, even rural areas. Obviously you can never forget the past and should forever celebrate and mourn its watershed moments. But it is time to think big folks. Time to take a risk. Time to move forward. Be an Estonian that will make your children proud. Make yourself proud. The people at the helm of Madison Project are not stupid. They are approaching this with intelligence and a forward thinking energy that is sadly missing from the cadre of folk who insist on living in the past. Eesti Maja was a grand achievement for pagulas Eestlus. But that's history. Let's forge a new history. Together.

Hilary Arthur Amolins