

The Historical Society of St. Boniface & Maryhill Community



1338B Maryhill Rd., Maryhill ON N0B 2B0

website: maryhillroots.com

email: maryhillroots@gmail.com



Join Our Society! Become a Member!
Membership: \$25 Annual \$50 Lifetime

Fall 2019

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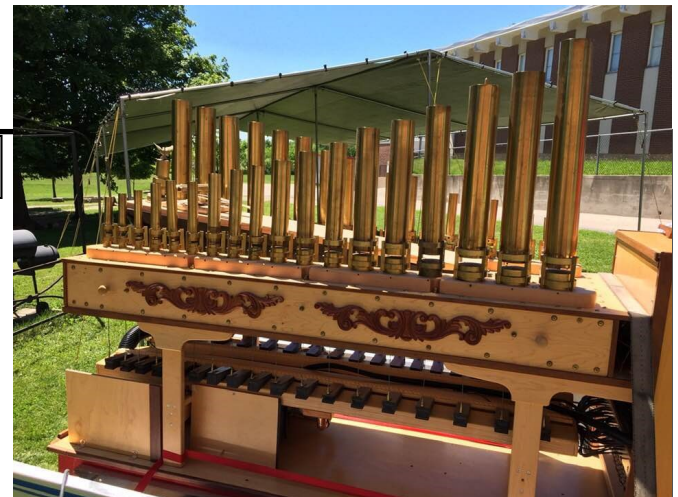


Join our
Facebook Group:
[Maryhill Roots](#)

This private group is a great place to see pictures, comments and old friends from the community. Search for us and request to join!



Pictures from Canada Day 2019



Greetings From The President

A big thank you to all who made our Canada Day a great success. With attendance of 100+ we had much to offer including horse drawn wagon tours of the village, a cemetery tour, representation from New Horizons, the Lion's Club, Woolwich Fire Department (Maryhill) and the Knights of Columbus. We had live music, music from an antique circus callopie and much more.

On September 22nd we celebrated Heritage Day at the Community Centre. Thank you to our generous donors, our generous Heritage Day attendees and all who returned raffle tickets. The money raised will support our 2020 operations.



This summer we launched a successful Facebook Group that has allowed us to reconnect with old friends, meet relatives and share pictures and stories of the area. And as the fun of the summer and fall seasons wraps up, so does my two year term as president. A rewarding experience, I encourage anyone who is passionate about our community and heritage to volunteer with us. November 17th marks our Annual General Meeting where we will vote our new President, Board of Directors and Committee members. I am pleased to welcome Joanna Hall-Rickert as our guest speaker at our AGM. Joanna recently published "[Waterloo You Never Knew.](#)" I look forward to seeing you all at our AGM!

George

From of Our Community: Earl Stroh

This fall we feature Earl Stroh, a friendly and hard working family man, with a passion for car racing and fastball.

Born June 17 1940 in Kitchener, to parents Stanley Stroh and Geraldine Karley. Earl was 2nd in a line up of siblings including Sally (Brohman) then Earl, Ken, Rosemary (Uhrig), Don, and Sheila (Parsons). Earl started school at St. Joseph's on Courtland Ave in Kitchener. The family moved to New Dundee, Breslau, Ariss and eventually Maryhill where they rented a house owned by Joe Moyer.

Earl attended grade school at Pilkington and then Maryhill. When Earl was in Grade 10, his father, a bulldozer driver, died unexpectedly at the age of 37. Being the oldest son, Earl quit school and

found his first job at the Kurtz Produce Turnip Plant on 8th line, owned by Willy and Jim Kurtz. Earl boarded with Helen and Jim Kurtz. Earl awoke early in the morning, did chores, had breakfast and then went on the mail run with Albert Kurtz (his employer's father). At noon they would stop and have lunch at Albert's house, and then finish the mail run. He would then head off to the turnip plant to wash and wax the turnips. Back to Jim and Helen's for dinner, Earl would finish off his day with more chores and maybe even more turnip waxing, and then head off to bed. Not much down-time for a 15 year old! Earl would go home to his mother's on the Saturday evening after chores. For all his work Earl was paid \$30, and of this, he handed over \$20 to his mother. Eventually Earl moved back home and took employment at Electrohome on Victoria Street. He was often laid off, and called back and eventually he moved to a division of Electrohome named Deilcraft.

Earl's fun behind the wheel began when he was 16. Helen Kurtz took him to get his license—he got his beginners and drivers license both in the same day. Earl purchased a 1938 Dodge Coupe from Nora and John Yacht, for \$35. Earl and his friends, Laverne and Howie Brohman, wanted to race the car at the Bridgeport Speedway. The boys took iron stakes from snow fencing and welded them to the car to form a roll cage (how safe was that?). They asked Bert Lichty, their older friend, to be their driver. After 3 races, and no wins, Earl thought he could do a better job as the race car driver; however he had a problem. Being only 16 years old, he needed his mother's consent and Geraldine Stroh was not about to sign off to allow her son to drive at the speedway. Earl was determined and knew that his mother was passionate about drum and bugle corps. He offered to take her to see the Drum and Bugle Corp perform in a local parade – if – she would consent to allow Earl to be a race car driver.

That Saturday, Earl and his friends towed (with a chain of course) the car to the raceway where Earl was excited to make his debut as a race car driver! His first race was a bust – he was disqualified when he almost drove into the starter. In spite of this Earl was hooked—he loved the sport and continued to learn to be a better driver.

Over the years, Earl raced better cars than the initial jalopy. His main sponsor was Logel's Auto Parts from Bridgeport. His most famous car was the Fireball 5 – and he won 19 races in a row with it!



More about Earl Stroh

Earl raced not only at Bridgeport Speedway but also at Flamboro, Grand River Raceway, Cayuga, Hideaway and more.

During his racing days, Earl started to date Mary Ann Fehrenbach. They knew each other as children, having gone to school together. Mary Ann and her friends Rosemary Stroh and Cookie Brohman enjoyed watching the races in Bridgeport. Earl and Mary Ann married May 27 1961 and moved in with Mary Ann's mother, then to Chestnut street in Kitchener and then back again to Maryhill where they rented from Florence and Alex Zettel. In 1965 they built the house they still live in. Earl and Mary Ann have three children – Jan, Michael and Lee Ann. Earl remembers the day when Jan was born. He had won a race a few days later and picked up Mary Ann and the new baby (no baby car seat required back then) with a trophy on the front seat!

Earl had fun at his races, but he was a hard worker and good provider for his family. He worked for 38+ years in the welding industry starting at Carter Brothers Welding Supply Delivery as a truck driver. Carter's was sold to Canadian Oxygen where he ran a branch in Guelph and Waterloo. For a number of years, on his way home from work, Earl would pick up auto parts for Voisin's garage and work there for a few hours. He also bartended at the Commercial Hotel on Friday and Saturday nights and was a volunteer fire fighter.

Today Earl and Mary Ann enjoy their retirement in Maryhill. Earl tinkers in his shop out back welding, fixing and fiddling with things. They are still race and fastball fans and attend the various tournaments where Mary Ann is a score keeper. They babysat their great-granddaughter one day a week until she recently started JK in September. The Historical Society is proud to congratulate their granddaughter Erin Wetzel on recently being crowned Miss Oktoberfest 2019!



Dear Diane:

I've read about lawn parties and events in the Maryhill area where the entertainment was by 'The String Band'. Who were they?

Dear Readers:

The New Germany String Band was comprised of 4 members with 2 violins, a bass fiddle (similar to a Cello) and a guitar. The band began playing together in 1888 and supplied music at weddings and other functions throughout the area from Freelon to Walkerton. The band was comprised of the following local members (at one time or another). Brothers - Andrew, Marcus and Albert E Zinger, George Vogt and Eugene Elmlinger.



Left to Right: Andrew Zinger, Marcus Zinger, George Vogt or Eugene Elmlinger and Albert Zinger.

The String Band was still playing in 1904—as noted in the Bloomindale United Church Annual Report. "We had our annual picnic at Fernando Snyder's Oxbow farm when a large number congregated and we had a real good time. Special music by **The String Band** and various sports for the young people to which was added a sumptuous feast, making all feel delighted and satisfied with their outing ". See The Last Word for a story about [Eugene Elmlinger](#)!

Wagons, Horseshoes, Coffins, Dances, Stamps, Gasoline:

Maryhill's One-Stop Shop

By Diane Strickler

In a large city, the opening of a variety store is seldom big news. Substitute a small township village that's been without a store for a decade, now that definitely qualifies as big news. In the far northeast corner of Woolwich Township, Tara and George Kanellis opened the Maryhill Market (aka Maryhill Mini-Mart) in early 2018 on the corner of St. Charles Street and Maryhill Road. And they did it in a 106 year old brick building that has been an important part of the village's history. Until 1912 a smaller wooden building stood at the corner, housing several small businesses but this story begins with Martin Weiler.

Martin was just 5 years old when his family immigrated from the Grand Duchy of Baden (a state in the German Empire) in 1847. By 1872 he had settled in New Germany (Maryhill's original name), established himself as a wagon maker, met Appolonio Roth of that village, married her and, over the next 18 years, helped his wife raise 16 children. He died in 1916 followed 11 years later by Appolonio. One of those 16 children was Jacob Martin Weiler (1875-1962) and it was Jacob who took over his father's wagon making business gradually shifting its focus to blacksmithing. In 1912, Martin and Jacob replaced the wooden building with a brick one which, a century-plus later, became the Maryhill Market. Beside the shop, Jacob and his wife Louisa (Bruder) erected a still-standing red brick house. The blacksmith works shifted to a shed beside the house and Jacob began turning out cast iron products for the area's farmers. Jacob was always looking ahead and diversified; as an accomplished carpenter he turned out coffins to augment the family income. During the Second World War, with the name of the village now Maryhill, he and a couple of brothers turned the old shop into a dance hall / wedding reception hall. Maryhill's Edward Halter House archives contains several references to such a use for the corner building. The Weilers sold the building in 1944 but it stayed within the family; Cyril J Brenner had courted and married Marie, one of Jacob and Louisa's daughters. The 70-year-old Jacob was happy to keep the building within the clan while he took wartime work at the Sunshine factory in Waterloo. Cyril and Marie Brenner refurnished the shop, opened a general store / post office with living quarters at the rear of building and installed a Texaco gas pump out front. The Brennens stayed only a decade before selling to Rose and Alf Waechter. Upon retirement the Waechters sold the property to Richard and Marg Berwick, who added a donut shop to the business. Following the Berwicks, the Camilleris and the McMullens operated the store on the corner. Sometime around 2008 or 2009 Maryhill lost its general store, as did many small rural communities,



as residents and area neighbors did their shopping in the nearby larger towns and cities.

Fortunately, the Kanellis family had taken a liking to Maryhill; acting on faith and a good business plan, they have pumped commercial life back into the old Weiler building. The structure still bears its datestone above the front door but in 2019, the '1912' is obscured by a light mounting.



Thank you to our Generous Heritage Day Donors :

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Thank You

Individual Donors

Family of the late Kathleen Moyer
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 Jane Schell
 Tom & Charlene Schell
 Larry Stephens
 Danny & Diane Strickler
 Mary Ann Stroh
 AnneMarie Webster
 Lee Ann & Nick Wetzel
 Karen & Elmer Zettel
 Lisa Zettel

**Special Thank You to the CWL
 for the delicious lunch!**

From the Past - A Hoosier Cupboard

Many of our members will recognize this antique hoosier from their kitchens. The hoosier, a free-standing cabinet was the equivalent of the modern day built-in kitchen cupboards. Often a corner cupboard and dry sink accompanied the hoosier in the kitchen. The hoosier pictured here had an enamel counter space about 40 inches wide that slid out to allow for more room for baking. It included a flour-bin/sifter and sometimes a glass jar that swung out for cookies. The Hoosier Manufacturing Co. from Indiana was one of the earliest and largest manufacturers of these cabinet. They peaked in popularity in the 1920s and declined as homes were constructed with built in kitchen cabinets and countertops. While many were manufactured by other companies, the "Hoosier" cabinet became a generic term for this piece of furniture.



Soufflenheim Civil Birth Index 1792-1862

By Ken Hanson

We now have the **Soufflenheim Civil Birth Index 1792-1862** with thanks to Robert Wideen of New York City. This information is searchable. Bob has so kindly shared this information with us. It is posted on both Bob's website and linked from our website. Bob's website has a wealth of other information related to Soufflenheim. The graphics are exquisite. We have a hard copy of the **Soufflenheim Civil Birth Index 1792-1862** at Halter House.

See: <http://maryhillroots.com/archives-genealogy/> or <https://soufflenheimgenealogy.com/>

Join us at Our Annual General Meeting

Sunday November 17 2019

Maryhill Heritage Community Centre 58 St. Charles St. E. Maryhill **2pm to 4pm**

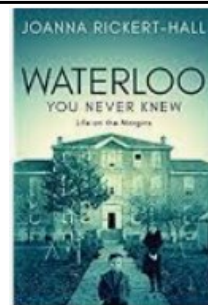
Agenda: 2 to 3pm: Annual Reports, Constitutional Amendments, Election of 2020 Board

3 pm to 4pm: **Guest Speaker: Joanna Rickert-Hall**

Joanna Rickert-Hall is a social historian engaged in the unending search for arcane and overlooked histories. She is the 2015 recipient of the Jean Steckle Award for Excellence in heritage education. Author of the recently released book "Waterloo You Never Knew".

Joanna writes not of the typical famous historical figures but of those who were marginalized, weird, and wonderful — real people who lived between the boundaries of mainstream existence. *Waterloo You Never Knew* reveals forgotten and little known tales of a community in transition and reflects on those lives lived in infamy and obscurity, by choice or design. Meet the rumrunner, the ex-slaves, and the cholera victims, the grave-digging doctor, the séance-loving politician, and the sorcery-practicing healer.

If you can't attend the meeting, feel free to sign your Proxy Vote allowing for someone to vote on your behalf. Proxy Forms can be found online at www.maryhillroots.com.



Heritage Day Celebrations:

60th Wedding Anniversary:

Margaret (Rider) & Frank Groselle

50th Wedding Anniversary:

Doug & Sandra Zinger

Carolyn & Dave Carnahan

Joining the 80+ Birthday Club:

Mary Campagnaro

Elmer Zettel

Congratulations to our Heritage Day Winners

Jean Batte—Waterloo —\$200 (Donated by TMC Fencing)

Fred Buehner—Waterford —\$200 (Donated by 12 Ga. Customs)

Julie Nafziger—Waterloo - \$100 (Donated by Dave's Garage)

Gerald & Helen Kieffer—Shelburne—\$100 (Donated by Dumfries Mutual)

Brian Lorentz - Maryhill \$50 Gift Card (Donated by E.B. Games)

Marg Reinhart - Kitchener—\$50 Gift Card (Donated by E.B. Games)

The Last Word **The Beer Barrel Polka**

Leander (Chester) Weiler (1913—1996) told a story that has been passed down from generation to generation and it is documented in the book "New Germany to Maryhill" written by Diane Strickler and Mary Ann Stroh. When Chester was a young boy he helped the church organist at St. Boniface, and was designated to do the organ pumping. The organ, choir and organist sit up in the balcony at St. Boniface and back then, a child always helped the organist by manually pumping the organ's bellows.

One Sunday morning at mass, during Father Foerster's sermon, the organist fell asleep. That organist was Eugene Elmlinger a member of The String Band. Apparently he had been out late the night before performing at a party and had, perhaps, a bit too much to drink. Little Chester Weiler, a young boy at the time, was designated to do the organ pumping. Chester roused Eugene to play the organ for the Offertory. Startled, Eugene woke up and played the Beer Barrel Polka—"Roll Out the Barrel". Father was not happy and after that day the School Sisters of Notre Dame were called in to play the organ during Mass. But as Chester used to say - they weren't half as much fun!

We laugh at the story above, but please note the story has been challenged for validity. Chester would swear it happened, and we have confirmation from other ancestors that this did indeed happen, but we question the tune played. Father Forester left St. Boniface in 1923, so we know this event happened before that. The Beer Barrel Polka was not written until 1927 and lyrics added even later. Ada (Reinhardt) Seifried also claimed to be at mass that morning; however she thought the tune was "du Lauterbach" which we know as "Oh Where Oh Where has Our Little Dog Gone".

Regardless, Elmlinger played a catchy tune that was not found in any of our hymn books, but certainly makes for a good story!

This column will feature stories from years ago—often handed down by word of mouth.

Got a story you want to share? Contact us!!