

The Maryhill Historical Society

Maryhill
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



1338B Maryhill Rd., Maryhill ON N0B 2B0

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Join Our Society— Become a Member

Membership: \$25 Annual

\$50 Lifetime

Fall 2020

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A Small Discovery in the Old Walled Cemetery

The old walled cemetery in Maryhill contains over 90 cross-shaped iron grave markers symbolizing the German-Alsatian background of our settlers. Crafted by local blacksmiths, these crosses contain iron bars with coiled foliage. The unique iron crosses provide for a little variety in a stone-filled cemetery.

For years now, Ron Schmuck has been repairing stones in the old walled cemetery. Ron sits on the Maryhill Historical Society Board and the St. Boniface Cemetery Committee. Over the past few years he has focused on repairing the iron crosses. He even purchased a set of 3 Ornamental Scroll Makers, from England, so he could recreate missing iron coils. He uses a brazing torch instead of a forge to heat the metal enough to bend around the Scroll Makers. This allows duplicate scrolls to be made which are fairly consistent, though not perfect, which is exactly how the original ones look that were made by our local blacksmiths. They also probably used a similar form to wind the hot metal. This website shows pictures of his work: <https://st-boniface-owc.weebly.com/restoration-projects.html>



As Ron was restoring the crosses, he made a discovery of note. Most of the crosses are painted black with a white corpus. He found a few in Section D that appeared to be a greyish colour. As he restored them he painted them a dark grey. As he started to work in Section B, he found a cluster of 8 or 9 also painted this different colour so he photographed the colour and took it to a paint store for a colour match. To our surprise, the colour is called "French Blue". It appears that some of our ancestors wanted to show their French connection even on their monument. Ron will record the names and burial dates of these special crosses. Ron purchased the correct colour of paint and is in the process of painting the Lebensbaums (trees of life) back to their original colour, even those he had already painted grey.

Greetings From The President

Where do I start? 2020 has been a totally different year! All of us, including the Maryhill Historical Society, have been affected by Covid-19.

We have considered the safety of our members and have cancelled all remaining social events for 2020. This includes Halloween treat hand outs in October and "Christmas Cheer" in December. For Heritage Day this year, we filmed a video of the Wayside Shrine Tour. You can find it on our maryhill-roots.com webpage or our [Maryhill Roots Facebook page](#).

The Board of Directors have been meeting via video conferencing. We have been busy reviewing our constitution and policies and procedures. We ap-

proved a number of amendments to our Constitution and will seek approval from our members at the Annual General Meeting.

We will hold the Annual General Meeting virtually on Sunday November 22 2020. Those who wish to attend can join us in an online meeting. You will require a computer and we ask that you email us to register. We will then send you an invite to the meeting containing a link to a virtual meeting room. If you would like to attend, please send an email to maryhillroots@gmail.com by November 13.

Enjoy the updates in the newsletter and stay safe!

Tom

From Our Community: Father Ronald Voisin

By Susie Motz

Father Voisin reflects on his younger years, his time at St. Boniface Parish and the Maryhill community.

On April 7 1945, a very special baby was born to Anthony John Voisin and Jessie Sebulsky. Little Ronald Voisin came into the world to spread God's will to the Maryhill community!

At the time of Ron's birth, the Voisin family rented an upper apartment in a house in St. Clements, Ontario. St. Clements is a village located about 25 minutes (by car) west of Maryhill. It is very similar to Maryhill, both in size and the fact that the first settlers there were also Catholic and emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine and Germany. The Voisin family name is common in St. Clements.

Ron's father Anthony was a carpenter and mother Jessie was a stay-at-home mother to Ron, his brother and 2 sisters. Jessie was raised in Thunder Bay with family in Saskatchewan. She was very close to her sister who lived in Dundas, Ontario. Although St. Clements is Ron's roots, he doesn't remember much about it; when Ron was 2 years old, the family moved from St. Clements to Dundas.

Ron was raised in a very religious family. He recalls the kindness and love from his parents. He attended a Catholic grade school in Dundas and then a local Public High School. There was a Catholic High School in the area, but he would have to take a bus, and the public school was walking distance. While in school, Ron worked at a Grocery Store on weekends.

Father Voisin was ordained in 1972.

It was in high school that Ron made the decision to become a priest. He believed God had a plan for his life as a Shepherd and teacher. He had been an altar server and had spent a lot of time in the church and around priests; he thought their vocation was interesting. After high school Ron attended 4 years at Resurrection College in Kitchener. There he took university level courses for young men planning to enter the priesthood. During the summers, Ron worked at the local Westinghouse Plant. He then attended St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario. Father Ronald Voisin was ordained in May 1972 in the Cathedral in Hamilton by Bishop Ryan.

For 12 years, Father Voisin was an associate Priest at various parishes in Burlington and Hamilton. In 1984 he was named the Pastor of St. Michael's Parish in Waterloo. After 11 years, he was offered the Parish of Maryhill. The year was 1995, and Father settled in quickly. Father Voisin's good friend and cousin Romie Voisin lived in Maryhill. Father is a first cousin to Romie and Harold Voisin – the original owner's of H & R Voisin Motors. The Maryhill community welcomed the new priest with open arms; it was a good fit for all!

Over the years, Father has grown very close to the families in the parish. Some love him and have cared for him like they would an elderly parent.



Father Voisin Continued ...

On July 15 2020, after celebrating his 75th birthday, 48 years of priesthood, and 25 years at St. Boniface parish, Father Voisin said farewell to parishioners. At that mass, presentations were made to him by the St. Boniface Catholic Women's League and the Maryhill Historical Society. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 an "Open House" for Father could not take place but the community did not let that stop them from showing their gratitude.

When Father left the rectory for the last time on July 15th at 11am, parishioners and members from the community lined the streets to wish him good-bye in parade style. The church bells rang and the Maryhill fire truck led the procession while onlookers clapped and cheered Father on his journey to his retirement home.

In a similar fashion, residents from the village of Bloomingdale also lined the streets to wave as he passed by.

Father thanks the parish for their kindness, love, generosity and care over the years. He said there were far too many kind people to begin to try to name them all. Father welcomes visitors at his new retirement home – Cobble Creek Retirement Home - 210 Woolwich St, Kitchener, ON N2K 1S7. The owner, Debbie Schnurr (Yantz) asks that you call ahead (519-579-0655) to book your visit and she will ensure social distancing and sanitization protocols are done to ensure the safety of her residents.

Ask Diane - Our Local Historian



Dear Diane:

What can you tell us about the history of the rectory (the house the Priest lives in)?

Dear Readers:

The current rectory is not St. Boniface's original rectory. The original rectory is at 1364 Maryhill Road. It is a yellow brick house across from the church and now sits beside the Nursing Home. This rectory was built by Father John Baumgartner in 1852. It remained in use for twenty years. On January 2, 1882, the School Sisters of Notre Dame arrived to teach in the school and assist the priest. They occupied the small thirty year-old rectory. In 1888, Father Stephen Foerster, out of his own pocket, paid for the addition of a reception room and chapel on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second floor.

The Sisters provided a boarding school for girls, but needed more space, so a new two-storey convent was built in 1904. The building at 1364 Maryhill Road was turned into a residence and sold.

Father Edward Glowacki built the present St. Boniface rectory in 1872. This three-storey brick house consists of six rooms on the main floor as well as another six rooms upstairs with a large one-room attic occupying the third floor. This house was built to provide accommodation for at least three more priests. A new verandah was built in 1922 by Theodore Zimmerman and Frank Fehrenbach.

In the 1960's considerable renovations were made by Father Pickett to make it more livable.

Father Charles Schefter made renovations in 1981, creating an office for a secretary. What had formerly been the pastor's office now became the kitchen and what had been the kitchen became secretarial office, storage room and washroom. What once had been a cold storage room became the pastor's office. The current rectory has 2 offices, a kitchen, a dining room, 6 (bed and sitting rooms) plus 3 bathrooms. The house is large to accommodate multiple priests. Previously it sometimes accommodated 2 priests. Some of the priests had housekeepers with an apartment downstairs. Extra rooms were available to accommodate a visiting priest as well.



An Item From The Past: Pictures in The Parlour

Today, pictures found at auction sales and attics once hung in the parlours of our ancestors. These pictures almost always depict Jesus's Sacred Heart (with flames and a crown of thorns) or Mary's Immaculate Heart.



These pictures could be cheaper posters (for example the picture here of Jesus) or lithographs from prints. This picture of Mary was produced by Currier and Ives, a New York City printer, between 1835 to 1856.

The parlour was rarely used except for funerals (thus the term funeral parlour) or to entertain after a wedding. Children were not allowed to go into the room without permission. The parlour would have been furnished with a couch and a few chairs, maybe a corner cupboard or lounge, and on the walls hung large religious pictures.



Annual and Special General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 43th Annual and Special General Meeting of the Maryhill Historical Society will be held on Sunday November 22, 2020 at 2 pm.

As public gatherings continue to be limited under the emergency orders enacted by the provincial government, our meeting will be conducted electronically. The *COVID -19 Response and Reforms Act 2020* which amends the provisions of the Corporations Act permits this to be possible.

To register and receive the link for the Annual and Special General Meeting please email your request to maryhillroots@gmail.com by November 13, 2020.

In addition to approving the minutes of the 2019 AGM, receiving the annual financial report and election of directors, members will be asked to adopt the amendments to the Constitution and General Bylaws of the Society, which were passed by the Board of Directors in July 2020.

Summary of Amendments to the Constitution and General Bylaws

- Name change as approved by the members at the 2019 annual meeting
- Addition of Definitions for clarity
- Addition of previously unwritten but implied long standing and existing procedures
- Ex Officio members expanded to include other associations and societies
- Standing Committees expanded to include members other than Directors
- An Officer other than the President, may be appointed to any Standing Committee
- Banking expanded to include option of a credit union
- Payments for re-occurring or monthly expenses may be made by pre-authorized debit
- Notice of regular meetings increased from 5 to 10 days prior to the meeting
- Notification of meetings expanded to include electronic means
- Increasing quorum for regular and board meetings from 4 to 5 directors
- Provision to postpone or cancel a meeting due to the declaration of a State of Emergency
- Provision to conduct meetings by electronic means due to the declaration of a State of Emergency
- Increasing period to conduct annual meeting from no later than November 30th to January 31st
- Increasing quorum for annual meetings from 8 to 12 members
- Addition of regulatory provisions applicable to the Society whether or not included in the bylaws
- Addition of 6 appendices to provide more detailed procedures on some specific items.

A complete text, with the Bylaw amendments, will be provided to members, via email, upon request. Members interested for election or re-election to the board are invited to submit their name before November 13, 2020.

Digging Graves - The Zettel Family's Cemetery Log

1920	1921
Feb 20 Child of John & Alfred 3.00	Feb 13 Mrs Edward Hauck 6.00
March 2 John Eisenbach 2.00	Feb 14 Joseph Hauck 6.00
April 1 Child of Richard Reinhardt 3.00	March 2 Joseph Joseph 6.00
May 1 Child of Albert Reinhardt 3.00	March 5 Mrs Martin Snyder 6.00
May 8 George Keller 5.00	April 8 Philip Fahren 5.00
May 9 Mrs Reinhardt 5.00	May 2 Child of Charles & Alfred 3.00
May 13 Child of King 3.00	June 7 Mrs John Gotsy 5.00
July 10 Mary Reinhardt 5.00	June 12 Mrs Am. Schuman 5.00
July 14 Engelbert Schmaltz 5.00	July 3 Michael Bets 5.00
July 15 Mary Lehman 5.00	July 4 Mrs Chas. Schuman 5.00
July 18 Mrs Mary Zinger 5.00	July 9 Mrs Frank Gels 5.00
July 21 William Beck 5.00	Aug 1 George Rellinger 5.00
Nov 1 Barney Zinger 5.00	Sept 26 George Schauer 5.00
Nov 1 Moving grass 6.00	Oct 1 John Gotsy 5.00
June 18 Twin sons of C. Schutt 5.00	Oct 3 Child of Edmund Antschy 3.00
Sept 17 John & Alfred 5.00	Oct 5 Ambrose Brohman 5.00
Nov 10 Louisa Wendling 6.00	Nov 1 Martin Alchert 5.00
	Nov 14 Mrs Anna Antschy 5.00
	Dec 1 Mrs Sara Reinhardt 5.00
	Nov 1 Moving grass 6.00

We can thank three generations of the Zettel family for caring for the St. Boniface cemetery (Frank X, William and Gerald) from 1899—1990. Karen (Zettel) Hayne sits on the Cemetery Board. She shared with us a precious piece of community and family history – a Cemetery Log maintained by her father Gerald and grandfather William. The dates in the book start in 1919. The book lists one year of graves per



Gerald Zettel

page, over a span of 70 years, until Gerald passed away in 1990. Each page lists the date, the name of the deceased and the cost to dig the grave. From what we can see, the cost to dig a grave in the 1920s, in the summer was usually \$5 but in the winter the charge was \$6 or \$7. Children's graves were only \$3 regardless of the season.

The Historical Society is seeking additional Board of Directors

We are a fun bunch that meet (virtually) monthly. We are proud of what we do to preserve and share our history.

No special skills required, just a love for Maryhill history!

Interested?

Email us
by November 13 at
maryhillroots@gmail.com



Weiler descendants visit the grave of Andrew and Johanna Weiler displaying Andrew's weaving on the left and the weaving of his great great great great granddaughter on the right.

Found in Grama's Scrapbook

Winter Larder

Farmers are killing, curing and smoking pork these days in preparation for the winter months. Here a group disposes of a half-dozen hogs on the Joseph Snyder farm at Bloomingdale. Left to right are John and William Hemmerich, West Montrose, Mr. Snyder and Clayton Brohman.



WINTER LARDER — Farmers are killing, curing and smoking pork these days in preparation for the winter months. Here a group disposes of a half-dozen hogs on the Joseph Snyder farm at Bloomingdale. Left to right are John and William Hemmerich, West Montrose, Mr. Snyder and Clayton Brohman.

The Last Word Trick or Treat

In the fall of 2013, during an interview with Cyril (Pat) Zinger (1920-2018), Pat told a story from his youth. He remembers heading to church with his family one Sunday morning. Pat wasn't sure of the year, but thought it was sometime between 1925 and 1930. As the family drove past the Commercial Hotel (then known as the Halter Hotel) they were startled to see a wagon up high on the hotel roof. Pat told us that the owner of the hotel was not well liked by some of the youngsters in the village. Under the cover of darkness the teens had taken an old wagon apart, climbed up on the hotel roof and re-assembled it, piece by piece. But, Pat said, that wasn't the worst of it. They had filled the wagon with manure and left it for all the villagers to see and for the hotel owner to deal with to take down.

Apparently, putting a wagon on a roof was a "trick" done more than once – especially at Halloween. In a conversation with some of our members, they reminisced about other tricks that were played on local residents. These 'tricks', also known as vandalism were often done years ago on Halloween or Devil's Night. A common trick was to knock over an outhouse – or worse yet – moving an outhouse back a few feet so the outhouse hole in the ground was exposed in front. When someone went to use the outhouse in the dark, they would step right into the hole filled with sewage. Knocking over rural mailboxes, often with a baseball bat, was also a common trick; however impacted farmers became wise to this and installed reinforced stands.

Hallowe'en has been celebrated by the children of Maryhill, dressed up in costumes and touring door-to-door, for over 80 years. Helen Wilhelm recalls going house to house in Maryhill as a little girl over 70 years ago. There was one house in Maryhill that didn't participate and instead the owner opened the door and swatted the kids with a tree branch. (We are quite sure the outhouse at this place was over-turned by the morning!)



In the village of Maryhill, most everyone knew each other and parents didn't worry about the goodies received. Kids ran through the village from 6pm until 8pm with no need for supervision. There were no "grocery store plastic bags" to collect the candy – instead a pillow case did the trick! Treats including unshelled peanuts, jelly beans and caramels, as well as homemade goodies including those delicious puffed wheat balls handed out at the convent by the housekeeper sister. Some people even gave out pennies!

The housekeeper sister at the Convent handed out delicious puffed wheat balls

*This column will feature stories from years ago—often handed down by word of mouth.
Have a story you want to share? Contact us!!*