



Calumet City Historical Society Newsletter

760 Wentworth Avenue, Calumet City, Illinois
708-832-9390 or 773-814-4520 • calcityhistory@aol.com
www.calumetcityhistoricalsociety.org

March–April 2022

Vol. XLVIII • No. 2

A Note to the Members. . .

MEETING & PROGRAM

The March General Membership Meeting is Sunday, March 13, 2:00 p.m. There will be a raffle drawing with a few winners. At the February meeting & program, Paula Swanstrom was installed as the new Director [at-large] to serve a three-year term, and we ordered extra pączki and still sold them all!

The museum displays are looking good after the winter cleaning and reorganizing. New exhibits planned are on Faith Bailey, “Our Catholic Heritage,” and a temporary exhibit for Women’s History Month. More to come.

MARCH PROGRAM

Our Lady of Knock Parish, founded in 1957, encompassed the southern part of Calumet City when hundreds of homes were being constructed during the 1950s and ‘60s to serve Calumet City’s large and growing Catholic community. Calumet City already had two parishes, St. Andrew the Apostle, a Polish national parish established in 1892, and St. Victor, organized in 1925; both were bursting at the seams. The school opened in 1958 and by the 1960s had 700 pupils. The Sisters of St. Dominic of Adrian, Mich., staffed the school. After the school closed, the building accommodated a growing CCD program. In 2019, the three parishes combined to form one new Catholic parish, *Jesus, Shepherd of Souls Parish*. Our Lady of Knock church, with its Marian stained-glass windows, continues as one of two worship sites for Mass and several activities.

**Calumet City
Historical Society Center**
760 Wentworth Ave.

Museum Hours:
Tuesday 2:00-4:00 p.m.*
Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
2nd Sunday 1:00-4:30 p.m.*

**General Membership
Meetings & Program:**
2nd Sundays*
Meeting 2:00 p.m.
Program 3:00 p.m.

*Generally Feb-Apr, Jun-Nov.

March 13 ~ Meeting & Program

2:00 p.m. ~
General Membership Meeting,
followed by refreshments and raffle sales.
St. Patrick’s Basket, OLK gift, & 50/50 Raffle.

3:00 p.m. ~
“Our Lady of Knock Parish”
by Fr. Pat Lyons.
Raffle Drawing.

THANK YOU TO MARGIE MICHEL

We want to give a big thank you to Marge Michel, who served six years as Vice President, and with a year off, four years previously as Secretary of the Society on the Board of Directors. Also, Marge has helped as chairperson for the annual raffle for seven years, won Member of the Year in 2017, co-chaired Heritage Day Americana, and chaired the Victorian High Tea in 2021. She has offered her Victorian home [built in 1892] for a few group tours. Lastly, Marge has donated several gift baskets, including the St. Patrick’s basket for the



raffle in March. Marge was presented with a plaque and gift certificate to thank her for the many ways she has helped CCHS. Thank you! ■

In Memoriam. . .



LaVergne Rose Balacky, 96, nee Zick, was born and raised in Calumet City, then lived in Dyer, Indiana, and recently at St. Patrick’s Residence in Naperville, Ill. LaVergne volunteered many years at St. Victor Parish and CCHS, a member here since 1982!

She came to many of the dinners and events, including her last visit to our St. Victor Church program and to attend the final St. Victor Pentecost concert. LaVergne was born in 1925. Her family home was at the southeast corner of Wentworth Avenue and 154th Place (home demolished ca. 2008). Her family owned an ice company that supplied the numerous taverns in Cal City. Her father, William Zick, was Mayor of the City of Calumet City from 1935-1937 & 1937-1941. [Funeral arrangements have not happened as of this printing.] ■

Welcome New Members. . .

Welcome to the many new and returning members. We are glad to have the support.

- **Judy Radzinski, (Calumet City)**
- **Lynn M. Jackson, Merrillville, Ind.** ■

Membership Drive Underway. . .

We hope everyone will renew their annual membership and feel free to invite others to support CCHS with a membership as well. If we have not received your membership renewal as of March 1, another form is enclosed in this mailing. New this year, you can pay by Zelle, email calcithistory@aol.com for details. Membership Forms are on our website or at the Center. Membership is open to all. Thank you for the great turnout so far! ■

The Calumet City Historical Society, Inc. is an Illinois non for profit corporation, and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Mail: 760 Wentworth Ave., Calumet City, IL 60409
Email: calcithistory@aol.com

Board of Directors 2022
Mike Wolski, President
Sue Warner, Vice President
Marilyn Schultz, Secretary
Louis Krawczyk, Treasurer
Casimira Bilinski
Frederick Schrum
Paula Swanstrom

Thank you donors. . .

For the month February 2022, the following members have donated to the Building Fund:

- Calumet City Cavaliers**
Larry & Barbara Hartman
Lynn M. Jackson
Wayne A. Presco
Cynthia Updyke
Iлона Woolf

For the month of February 2022, the following members have donated to the general fund or a donation otherwise:

- Casimira Bilinski**
Angela Enright
Frank Glanowski
Larry & Barbara Hartman
Mary Alice and Denise Kelly
Larry & Janice Kutz
Fred Schrum
Marilyn Schultz
Carrie Woodall ■

Requesting Anniversary Stories. . .

If anyone has a story and photo they would like to submit for the newsletter, please email calcithistory@aol.com. This year we would like to tell any articles on their 25th, 50th, 75th, or 100th anniversary, that would include the years 1997, 1972, 1947, and 1922. ■

Our Lady of Knock Campus. . .

The March program will feature the history of Our Lady of Knock Parish and the evolution of the church, school, rectory, and convent.



Photos taken 2022, courtesy of Mike Wolski.

Cal City History. . .

Women’s History Month

In the history of Calumet City are many notable women. Here are brief descriptions of a select number of women:



Virginia Brooks.

After inheriting some real estate from her father in the early 1910s, Virginia Brooks moved to West Hammond. Next, Virginia Brooks began a brigade against taxes, prostitution, and intemperance. She started a newspaper *West Hammond Searchlight* to uplift the residents during her vice crusade against the taverns, dives, and saloons, including State Street. A news article described Miss Virginia Brooks as the 20th-Century Joan of Arc. Miss Brooks turned three shuttered saloons into a day nursery, a soup house, and a social settlement house promoting education to residents in reading and writing English. She also supported the women’s suffrage movement. Her house still stands at 322 155th Place.



Gloria L. Dooley.

Former City Clerk of the City of Calumet City, from 2003 to 2011. In 2003, Gloria Dooley accepted the appointment as City Clerk for Calumet City after Michelle Qualkinbush was elected mayor. Gloria was the first African American to hold the office of City Clerk in the City of Calumet City. Previously, Gloria served a 40-year career as a senior public administrator for the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Unfortunately, Gloria suffered a stroke and died while in office as City Clerk on August 14, 2011. She was praised as a "grand lady who was dedicated to serving her community."



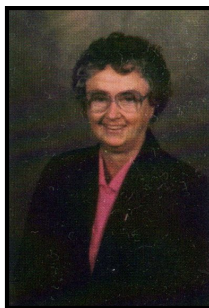
Michelle Markiewicz Qualkinbush.

Michelle was born and raised in Calumet City and attended Lincoln School and TF North. She began her life as a public servant at age 19, working for the city. Michelle was the first female City Clerk for 18 years, from 1985 to 2003. Next, Michelle was the first female mayor for 18 years, from 2003 to 2021. Michelle said she was proud of the work she did. She supported local organizations and acknowledged for her love of pets. Also, an enormous change to Calumet City—retiring hundreds of liquor licenses to just 41 in 2021 (from 250 in 1990) at the request of residents to remove taverns from dozens of blocks within the neighborhoods.



Faith Bailey.

In 1921, Faith Bailey, R. N., organized the Health Center in Calumet City with the guidance of the Tuberculosis Institute of Chicago and Cook County. To fund her Health Center, Mayor Paul Kamradt and citizens sold Christmas Seals. Faith Bailey was a nurse for 37 years and provided health care to the residents of Calumet City, promoting health rather than just treating disease, especially those with limited income. She was praised for being concerned with the “total child” years. By 1952, the city provided full support of the Health Center under Mayor Frank Kaminski. After her retirement, the new Faith Bailey Health Center was dedicated in 1959, under Mayor Stanley Bejger. Faith was praised for her community nursing. In the early 2010s, since healthcare was abundant, the city closed and demolished the building.



Sister Alban Hermes.

In 1984, Sr. Alban Hermes, a Sinsinawa Dominican nun, arrived at Our Lady of Knock Church as the pastoral associate. Sr. Alban helped with the church’s Bible studies, services, outreach, adult education, and in the Ministry of Care, where she visits those who are sick, homebound, or in the hospital, as well as the elderly. Sr. Alban was director and a founding member of the Calumet City Resource Center, which provides food and clothing for the needy. First starting at St. Victor Church, the churches worked together at its long-time home, 202 155th Place. Sr. Alban worked tirelessly, filling bags and recruiting volunteers. In 2004, Sister Alban received the Mother Teresa Award from the Italian Catholic Federation. Upon retiring after 30 years here, she said, “I’m grateful to have been part of the families in Calumet City and part of the parish. It’s been a very faith-fulfilling experience.”



Esther Schrum.

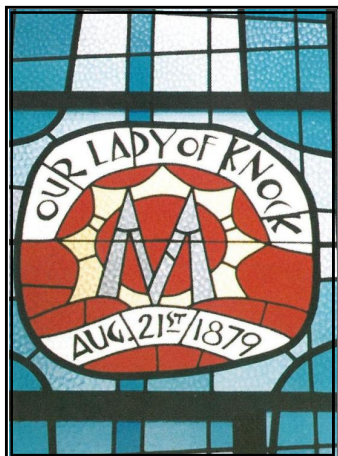
A local historian, Esther enjoyed teaching and sharing the history of pioneer life, including her family as early settlers. Esther Schrum conducted Children’s Story Hour at the library and told many stories about earlier days, farming, art, and life on the Schrum farm. Esther was involved with the Calumet City Woman’s Club. She was president of the Thornton Fractional Township High School Scholarship Foundation. In 1968, she displayed a 21-star flag at her home, 26 Schrum Road, for the 150th year of Illinois statehood. In 1975, Esther was a founding board member of the Calumet City Historical Society. ■



Calumet City Historical Society

760 Wentworth Ave
Calumet City IL 60409

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Newsletter
March – April 2022

Upcoming Events:

March 13 – 2:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.
 Program - 3:00 p.m.: *“Our Lady of Knock Parish”* by Fr. Pat Lyons. Our Lady of Knock was formed in 1957 and was the third Catholic Parish established in the City of Calumet City following St. Andrew the Apostle and St. Victor. The original Parish boundaries of Our Lady of Know were River Oaks Drive on the north, State Line Road on the east, I-80 expressway on the south, and Torrence Avenue on the west. Guest speaker, Fr. Pat Lyons, who is Pastor Emeritus, will give a history of the parish.



Msgr. Edward Burke celebrated the 12:15 dedication Mass and was assisted by Father Neary, Father Thomas Byrne and Father Richard Hills. Msgr. Martin O'Day was master of ceremonies.



See page 1 and page 2 for more details.

April 10 – 2:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.
 Program - 3:00 p.m.: *“The 1950 Census Released”* by Patty Higgins. Every ten years, on the first of April, the U.S. Census Bureau releases the U.S. Census from 72 years ago. Patty will discuss the information collected in 1950 and where you can find the census for research. This census will be enlightening as the first census post World War II and the beginning of the baby boomer generation.

April 30 – Cabin Clean-Up.
 Spring clean-up from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. If you can volunteer, please help at the cabin and cabin grounds.

May – No meeting.
 Happy Mother’s Day. Happy Memorial Day.

June 12 – 2:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.
 Program - 3:00 p.m.: Monee Heritage Center by Christina Holsten. Learn how the Monee Historical Society restored the 19th-century Creamery and saved it from demolition.

RUMMAGE SALE & HISTORY BOOKS

Please visit our rummage sale table. There are history books and Arcadia books on sale to benefit CCHS. ■