

NEWSLETTER

1220 N. 11th Street • St. Louis, Missouri 63106-4614 • Rectory Telephone (314) 231-9407

SUMMER-FALL ISSUE 2007

CHARLES FINNINGER

"Without Charlie's leadership, the Shrine may not have survived"

Charles Finninger is considered by many to be such a significant factor in the Shrine's ultimate success story that, without his tenacity and leadership during the difficult early years, the Friends of the Shrine organization might not have succeeded and this wonderful, historic church may not have survived.



Charlie announcing in 1979 the Friends incorporation as a not-for-profit organization

Finninger is one of the original founders of the Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc. He became this organization's first president when it officially-achieved a not-for-profit corporation status in 1979 and he remained in that position until 1988 when he stepped aside as president but has continued to serve on the Board of Directors as senior advisor to the president.

Finninger's devotion and attachment to this historic downtown landmark has spanned many years. Back in the early 1970's, an unofficial group calling themselves "the Friends" met at Finninger's restaurant in the days when this church was in danger of being abandoned by the Archdiocese. It was Finninger who provided the first major leadership in this group toward spear-heading the drive to save the Shrine from the headache ball.

Finninger met Father Filipiak, pastor of the Shrine, through a mutual friend. Said Charlie, "Father allowed us to use the old school's kitchen for our catering." He was so impressed with Father Filipiak and his love for this old church that Charlie and his wife, Cleo, became Catholic converts.

Finninger met four other men and they became the founders and first officers of the newly-formed Friends, Inc. with Finninger as its first president. Exactly 6 months later Father Filipiak was murdered in the rectory. Now Finninger and his fledgling organization was on its own against what appeared to be overwhelming odds of trying to raise enough public support for saving and restoring this sacred church that was in such a deteriorated condition. Ultimately, of course, the Friends were successful in not only saving but also directing one of the most beautiful and original restorations to be found anywhere--but not without great sacrifice from many.

Today, we are tempted to take all of this for granted. But it should never be forgotten what Charles Finninger and the organization endured during some very lean and difficult years. It has been said that Charlie had an uncanny ability to "tough it out" and "the tougher things got the more determined he became," said one

old-timer. Early on, the organization was in such dire need of revenue that Charlie literally had to "pass the hat" sometimes in order to pay utility bills. Said Ted Schafers, the oldest of the old-timers, "in the early days when we had little money, it was Finninger who contributed time and time again by picking up the tab on refreshments for fund-raising events."

Eventually Charlie built his successful catering business up to the point where it moved to a large building. With a staff now of over 40, they prepare federal and state-sponsored meals for senior citizens and other such programs. Finninger has had a strong pro-employee philosophy and gained a reputation for reaching out and hiring people who were in need of work. He said, "I try to treat employees like I want to be treated."

However, the irony is that Charlie suffered great personal sorrow when one of his employees went berserk and murdered both his wife, Cleo, and his daughter, Christine, at their business a year and a half ago due to distress over wage garnishment handed down by the courts.

Charlie has continued to attend church every Sunday with his long-time friend and business manager, Patty Meier, who also received multiple wounds on that day. Remarkably, he returned to work in less than a week after the crime. During that terrible time, we witnessed and admired the faith in the Lord that Charlie showed to all of us. Said Ralph Kannady, Board president, "it has been pretty impressive!" Charlie himself said, "God has been good to me. If I didn't have a deep faith, I'd not have been able to have made it."

Said Father Valentine, "Charlie is a most beautiful practicing convert Catholic, a truly wonderful person." Finninger has been referred to as a model citizen, a good and benevolent businessman, and always a personable friend to everyone. He is an individual whose leadership and contributions to the Shrine of St. Joseph will forever be etched in history.

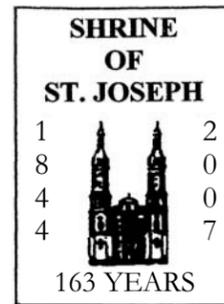
At the time of this printing, Charlie is ill and he is in our constant prayers.



Charles Finninger



Charlie and Patti Meier



Check if appropriate:
 My name is misspelled.
 My address is incorrect.
 I received more than one copy.
 I no longer wish to receive the Newsletter.
 I no longer wish this address panel and mail it to us noting your request.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Shrine of Saint Joseph's Friends, Inc.
 1220 North 11th Street • St. Louis, MO 63106-4614



NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
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 ST. LOUIS, MO
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Special Services

On First Fridays of Each Month - Mass at 12:00 Noon
 Every Second Sunday of Each Month - St. Padre Pio Devotion and Rosary recited before Mass
 Every Third Sunday of Each Month - Choir Sings Mass in Latin

Supporting the Shrine with Your Membership



Doris Kannady Please send donations by check. Any questions contact Doris Kannady, your Membership Committee Chair at (314) 231-9407 or see her or Ralph Kannady after Mass on Sunday.

On reviewing our membership files, we find some people have fallen behind on their annual dues, which are only \$10 a year or \$20 for both husband and wife. Filling out the application form below renews your membership for the year. Remember that all membership revenues are used to preserve and restore the Shrine. All donations are tax deductible, so encourage your friends.

Remember the Shrine in your will.

Application for Membership
 Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc.
 Dues are \$10.00 per person, per year

Mr. _____
 Mrs. _____
 Miss _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____
 Phone _____
 Check \$ _____ Check No. _____
 Date _____ Cash \$ _____
 Make checks payable to:
 Shrine of St. Joseph's Friends, Inc.
 1220 N. 11th Street • St. Louis, MO 63106-4614
 Renewal # _____ New Member

Air & Steam Club

Those of you who are members of the Air & Steam Club have, since its beginning, provided utility costs. We need your continued support as dues-paying members.

Our over-all utilities expense in 2006 was approximately \$23,000. Your generous support of the Air & Steam Club brought in \$20,000 to apply to these utility costs.

Thank you, Thank you! Please continue this level of support for the Shrine. If you are not currently a member, please join now. Your help is needed. Dues are just \$12 per year and all members participate in the monthly drawings for prizes totaling \$200.

Fill out the box below and mail to 1220 N. 11th Street, St. Louis, MO 63106. If you need additional information, please contact Ralph Ellerbrock, Leo or Pauline Frost, who serve as co-chairpersons. Phone (314) 231-9407.



Ralph Ellerbrock

Shrine of St. Joseph
 1220 North 11th Street, St. Louis, MO 63106-4614

AIR AND STEAM CLUB

Monthly Dues: \$1.00
 President Receives: \$100.00
 Vice President Receives: \$50.00
 Secretary Receives: \$50.00

1st Sunday of Each Month - Annual Dues \$12.00

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____
 Phone _____

Father Valentine's 85th

Father Valentine Young, the Shrine's religious administrator for nearly 25 years, will celebrate his 85th birthday with a dinner party at Glen Echo Country Club on Sept. 23rd. Please get your reservations in to Tom Milligan. Cost is \$25 per person. Let's have a big turn-out for Father Val. For more information, call 231-9407.

From Our Pastor



Fr. Valentine Young

When there is a wedding at the Shrine there are many little assignments that have to get taken care of. Who will open the door? Who will care for the bride? Who will meet the guests? Who will be available in the sacristy, etc?

The answer is the faithful wedding volunteers. Not just on the wedding day are the volunteers there but at the rehearsal also. This involves a number of hours and items for preparation. Why do they do this? Because they have a spirit of cooperation, a spirit of dedication to the Shrine all wrapped up in a deep faith in God, and a total dedication to the Lord himself. God bless our many wonderful wedding coordinators.

Board Appointment

Donna Milligan was recently appointed to the Board of Directors. Having been a dedicated volunteer at the Shrine for 20 years, she is very knowledgeable with and has contributed to nearly every facet of the Friends administrative work. Her latest contribution has been to create the Shrine's popular Christmas card program. Donna will be working with all aspects of purchasing for the needs of the Shrine as well as the many other areas with which she is involved.



Donna Milligan

Shrine's Wedding Volunteers Go the Extra Mile

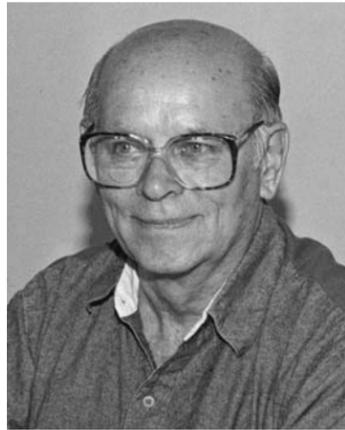
The popularity of weddings at the Shrine is not only clear testimony to the exquisite restoration of our historic church but also to the fine service provided by the Shrine's wedding volunteers. The magnificence of the Shrine speaks for itself. However, it would be nearly impossible to have these memorable weddings without the helpfulness and professionalism of our Shrine staff of trained volunteers. Composed of teams of four or five each, they perform a multitude of tasks in preparation for each wedding, as well as the rehearsal. As one visiting priest mentioned recently, "I get spoiled when I celebrate a wedding here because I always know these volunteers will have most every detail taken care of." Our wedding volunteers truly "go the extra mile" to do what they can toward making a Shrine wedding as perfect as possible.



Seated left to right: Gene and Mary Ann Wetzel, Jo Ann Geisz, Father Valentine, Kathie Schmid, Sharon Cloud, Kelly and Mark Kreikemeier. Standing left to right: Anita Schene, Bernie and Dooley Pestka, Shirley and Louie Vaughn, Mary Jo and Gary Weiss, Cathy Griese, Howard and Mary Matthews, Cathy Thompson, Betty and Bob Duffy, Jim Allen. Not in photo: Denise Allen, Kevin and Denise Finazzo, Bob Griese, John and Charmaine Moeller, Ed and Pat Shanahan, Tom and Janet Wakelam

Leo Frost: A Cherished Memory

Leo Frost, a long-time volunteer died on July 29th. The Board's secretary, Gloria Brostoski, eulogized Leo by saying: "He was well-known and admired for his many years of service not only to the Shrine but also to the St. Louis Polish Falcons, a major fraternal organization. Making up a list of important contributions was a difficult task, the reason being that Leo was truly a humble man. He was involved in many projects but he always left the credit of accomplishments to others. It has been said that humility is like Godliness. You can be sure he has accumulated a major record of eternal rewards for his volunteered services."



Leo Frost

Leo and his wife, Pauline, were married here at the Shrine in 1963. Around the time of Fr. Filipiak's murder in 1979, the Frosts became devoted Shrine volunteers. Leo was co-chairman of the Steam Club, and member of the Men's Club, both active fund raisers. He also headed up the entire group of ushers and was involved in numerous other fund-raising projects at the Shrine for over 27 years.

Christmas Card Sales

The Shrine Christmas cards will go on sale at the end of August and will have a superb color photo by Arteaga Studios of the Shrine's inspiring and holy Mary's Altar. \$10 for a box of 10. The cards and order forms will be available in the rear of the church after Mass and in the thrift shop. All proceeds support the Shrine's continuing restoration.

Restoration of Towers is Heading Down the Home Stretch

Restoration of the 125-year old, 120-foot high baroque tower stonework has to be considered the most complicated and massive project our organization has undertaken. The towers which have been a beacon of inspiration to all who have passed near them since 1881, are not only being returned to their former glory but this restoration should, with periodic maintenance, also prevent the incursion of further damaging water penetration. This project, now 8 months away from completion, is part of the original goal of total restoration of the Shrine which the Friends organization began over 27 years ago.

Having started last August a year ago, the east tower is nearly finished with the lower east band of stonework yet to be done. Work is continuing on the placement of lead coated copper flashing on upper horizontal areas. In January, work also began on the west tower and the majority of activity is now focused on this tower. All of the west side (facing 11th Street) of the west tower is now completed.

Its both an inspiring and impressive daily scene as workers are often scaling three sides simultaneously. As one group is cutting back deteriorated, original sandstone to sound strata, others are lifting new pre-cut limestone high onto the tower for placement. The work is both an arduous and methodical "one stone-at-a-time" operation, because, although the stones are all pre-cut for a given location, the new pieces often still need to be "fine tuned" to fit with absolute preciseness. This is done directly at the location high up on the workers' suspended platform.

Midway up, the ornamental consoles and the fleurs de lis will be the last areas to be restored using Jahn restoration mortar. The eight fleurs de lis located in each corner in front of the consoles --in varying stages of deterioration--have all been removed and are being restored off-site. The roofing in these corners will require special attention to protect them from the elements.

At ground level, you can now see the stunning and beautifully dramatic profiles of new stonework all the way up the front of east tower and also parts of the west tower. With favorable weather conditions, the entire project is due to be completed by next April.



The impressive new stonework on the nearly completed east tower.



BEFORE: West tower, lower band, facing 11th St. with old, deteriorated sandstone cut back ready for application of new limestone.



AFTER: the same area with the stunning new limestone facings duplicating the handsome beauty of the original stone profiles.

Shrine Attracts Media Attention

After the last newsletter mailing which described the tower restoration, various members of the media featured the Shrine. Notable among these was KETC- TV Channel 9's Anne Marie Berger, a producer of the popular "Living St. Louis" program. She

interviewed Ted Wofford, the Shrine's long-time architect, and Les McLaughlin, Shrine historian, and produced a segment about the Shrine, which was televised three times and can still be viewed by going to www.ketc.org.

Photos by Arteaga

Visit our website at: www.shrineofstjoseph.org