

# NEWSLETTER

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

WINTER-SPRING ISSUE 2006

## RALPH ELLERBROCK 60 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE SHRINE

Another major milestone is occurring at the Shrine, one that is not likely to happen ever again. On Good Friday, April 14th, Ralph Ellerbrock will have provided a truly mind-boggling and staggering 60 years of service as our organist. But to say he has provided 60 years at the Shrine would be an understatement. To say Ralph is a living legend having dedicated his entire life to the Shrine and its well-being comes closer to describing this man's devotion and love for this historic and miracle-endowed landmark.

As if being organist and choir director were not enough, Ralph's weekly schedule can include conducting tours, running the Air and Steam Club, helping a couple select wedding music, playing one or two weddings, Men's Club president, organizing raffle tickets, re-filling altar candles after each Mass, and...well, you get the point—Ralph's energetic devotion to this Shrine is extraordinary.

Ralph started playing at the age of 14 in 1946, when, on Good Friday, he was called to step in and play the big Pheffer pipe organ because the regular organist was ill. After that, when his mother directed the choir, he played the organ and, when she played, he sang in the choir.

Ellerbrock could very well have the record among Archdiocesan organists for length of service, and this number of years obviously means that he could easily "write a book" on his memoirs from the Shrine's difficult years to the better times. When the Shrine was in its most deteriorated state in the early 1970's Ralph remembers playing in the winter. "I used to wear gloves to play when it was cold and we couldn't afford heat. Frequent visitors during those years," said Ralph, "were our winged friends whose favorite nesting ground was in the organ pipes. It was not easy keeping your mind on your music when an agitated bird was flying over-head." In fact, on Christmas Eve one year, Ralph came in to church, turned on the lights to prepare for Midnight Mass, and found what appeared to be hundreds of starlings who not only dive-bombed Ralph and the choir but also the congregation that night! "Folks who visit the Shrine today don't realize what we all went through in those years

and how far we have come," said Ralph.

Ralph attended the old St. Joseph parish school in the early 1940's; "Enrollment had dropped off so much," said Ralph, "that there were only 7 students left in my class." The family lived just a couple of blocks from church and Ralph vividly remembers how the neighborhood gradually went from tenements, to truck depots, to empty lots before Columbus Square was built. At a young age he began playing the piano; then the family got a home organ which he also learned on.

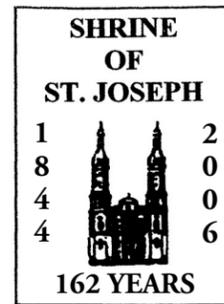
Ellerbrock's dream was to some day have the 1890 Pheffer pipe organ completely restored and playable. (the organ had not been playable for 10 years—and a Hammond was used during that time) In 1998, a special fund was set up to help finance the complete restoration of the historic organ. "Financial support for this project was very gratifying," said Ellerbrock. After nearly 3 years of work, Ralph's dream came to fruition thanks to many wonderful donors. On May 20, 2001, the completely-restored organ was re-dedicated and the happiest of those present on that day had to have been Ralph.

Ellerbrock has developed a loyal following who have come to love his playing and cherish his selections. The most often-heard comment goes something like this: "With Ralph and the choir, I really feel I am hearing music at a Catholic Mass the way it is supposed to be."

The fact-of-the-matter is that Ralph's longevity of service and his experiences are not likely to be duplicated. What else can be said about a person who has given so many uninterrupted years of his life to this Shrine? The answer is simply: not enough. And so, to Ralph, on behalf of the Friends membership and Shrine supporters everywhere, thank you for 60 devoted years, and, hopefully, many more.



Ralph Ellerbrock



Check if appropriate:  
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 I no longer wish to receive the Newsletter.  
 I no longer wish to receive the Newsletter.  
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The Shrine of Saint Joseph's Friends, Inc.  
 1220 North 11th Street • St. Louis, MO 63106-4614



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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

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. 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.

### 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 2005 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

### 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

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

### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

### From Our Pastor, Fr. Valentine Young

Volunteers abound in happy people at the Shrine of St. Joseph. That is what makes the Shrine so unique and unusual according to other priests and laity. Their question is, "how do you do it? How do you accomplish so much at the Shrine?" Well, take a look at the volunteers. There is a good number in the choir, men's club, ushers, the wedding volunteers, steam club volunteers, membership volunteers, rummage sale workers, the sanctuary society group, board of directors, and many others for special occasions. I am so proud of each of them and what they do. That is why they all can sit back and smile as they read this poem:



Fr. Valentine Young

### Volunteers

Many will be shocked to find, When the day of judgment nears,  
 That there's a special place in heaven for volunteers.  
 Furnished with big recliners, satin couches and footstools,  
 Where there's no committee chairman, group leaders or carpools;  
 No eager team that needs a coach, No bazaar and no bake sale.  
 There will be nothing to be stapled; Not one thing to fold or mail,  
 Telephone lists will be outlawed, But a finger snap will bring  
 Cool drinks and gourmet dinners, And rare treats for a king.  
 You ask "Who'll serve these privileged few,  
 And work for all they're worth?"  
 Why, all those who reaped the benefits,  
 And not once volunteered on earth!

## The Wedding Connection

Today, the Shrine is a lasting highlight in a young couple's marriage ceremony. But did you know that a wedding which occurred here at St. Joe's on Jan. 20, 1885, has a very living connection today?

Henry Rowles and Maria Gesina Schaper were married on that date. It so happens that all of our regular servers at Sunday Mass in both the Litzau and Angeli families are related because this couple is the great-great grandparents of Hannah and Alex Litzau and is also the great-great-great aunt and uncle of Matt, Mary, Ruth, and Isaiah Angeli, which are all of our six servers. Marilyn Angeli, mother of the Angeli children, and Jane Litzau, mother of the Litzau children share the same great-great grandfather, Gerhard Henry Schaper. Both mothers, Marilyn and Jane, are 3rd cousins which means that the 1885 Shrine wedding makes all our servers 4th cousins.



From left to right: Alex Litzau, Isaiah Angeli, Matt Angeli, Father Val, Hannah Litzau, Mary Angeli, and Ruth Angeli.



Henry and Maria Rolwes 1885 wedding photo



Ralph Kannady

## From the President: Preserving What We Have Restored

What we have learned recently is that we have to maintain or preserve what we have previously restored. For example, this past year, we did some dome sanctuary re-painting, replaced wood in the towers and re-painted the louvers, re-stained the pews and floors, refurbished the altars and other areas and now we are re-leading parts of our stained glass windows. Your Board approved about \$70,000 for these projects which were done over 15 years ago, but which needed work again. These types of periodic maintenance, including the eventual costly roof replacement, obviously impact our budget, but are a necessary part of taking good care of this historic church. I would like to commend Conrad Philipp and Walt Raney of our building committee for their vigilance in keeping up on these projects.

I am enthused about beginning the tower restoration. Elsewhere is an article by our architect explaining some of the results of his close-up inspection. The next step will be for him to develop an "outlined specification" list that will be used with contractors. By the next newsletter, I hope we are close to starting this last major restoration.

Regular Newsletter readers know that I periodically make a plea for volunteers, and for good reason. Our dedicated volunteers who have served the Shrine faithfully all these years won't last forever. If we are going to keep our organization going into the next 25 years, new volunteers will be needed.

Are you interested for a way to return some of the blessings you have been receiving? You will find a way by volunteering at this blessed and sacred Shrine. Any newly-retired persons who could donate some time, please consider joining the Shrine's family of volunteers. See or call me for more information on how you can help.

## Weddings are Thriving

With the exquisite beauty and sacred aura of the Shrine's magnificently-restored interior, each year the number of wedding bookings keeps flourishing. JoAnn Geisz and Kathie Schmid, serve as co-chairpersons of the Shrine's Wedding Program. Mrs. Geisz reports that a whopping 62 weddings are currently booked for 2006 and wedding requests for 2007 are now coming in.

When asked about the Shrine's popularity, Mrs. Schmid simply said, "the Shrine sells itself once it is seen." For information about weddings, these ladies will be happy to talk with you and can be reached by calling our wedding office at 231-0869.

Visit our Web site at [www.shrineofstjoseph.org](http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org)

## 25th Anniversary Honorees

At the Oct. 2nd anniversary Mass celebrating the 25 years of the Friends' stewardship of the Shrine, five people pictured below were recognized for their leadership and tenacity during a time in the 1970's when the Shrine had a very uncertain future. They, along with the hundreds of volunteers and thousands of donors over these 25 years, have made this restoration a modern-day miracle.



From left to right: **Ted Wofford**, the Friends volunteer architect who has directed the restoration; **Ted Schafers**, chief corporate fund-raiser, public relations and Newsletter editor; **Ralph Ellerbock**, organist and music director, men's club president etc., **Charles Finninger**, the Friends first president; **Eugene Boll**, the Friends first treasurer. Both Finninger and Boll are the only surviving members of the original five founders of the Friends, Inc. The other three: Robert Arteaga, Bob Voss, and Charlie Heisler are deceased.

Photos by Arteaga Studios

## Analysis of Condition of Tower Stonework

by Ted Wofford, Shrine Architect

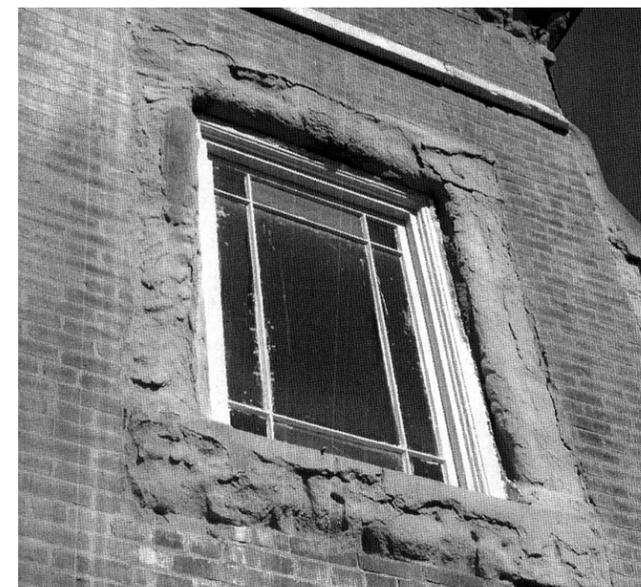
In November, the presence of the painters re-painting the tower louvers of the two belfries offered the opportunity to use their lift to inspect the condition of the stone on the towers prior to preparation of the necessary construction documents required to contract for this last major phase of the restoration work. This inspection was documented in over 175 digital photos permitting enlarged examination of selected trouble spots. This close-up physical investigation indicated that the condition of the stone varies over an extreme range, from relatively sound to almost totally eroded.



Typical deterioration of stone on corners and horizontal surfaces.

The problem we have faced with the south facade in general is that the stone used is a sandstone that is of a largely water soluble or water-affected composition. We have had it analyzed, and mineralogically, it is high in calcite, which largely binds the grains of the sand together, goethite, an iron-conversion material, and smectite-kaolin, a combination of two clays. All of these components are susceptible to water, especially if it is acidic, as St. Louis water tends to be. It is also highly variable in quality, explaining the wide range of deterioration encountered. Some stones show little weathering, and these can be consolidated and profiles easily rebuilt, using appropriate materials similar to the work on the flatter areas of the south front. However, other similar areas, are nearly completely dissolved, and present severe challenges.

It had been our hope, due to the distance from viewers that limits close visual inspection, to simply re-build many of the profiles once we had taken off the unsound material; however, our inspection has substantially reduced the scope of this simplest form of restoration. Many of the surfaces that appeared sound, even through binoculars, have been found to be eroded behind the facing that hangs with very little physical connection, and are not



Badly weathered sandstone around an upper window.

only fragile, but potentially even hazardous. This is a condition with which we are very familiar from the previous work so we know how to address it efficiently, but it is essential to get rid of the hanging facing as soon as possible. This removal of failed material is the essential first step in any kind of repair work, as we must begin with sound material.

A number of conditions will require replacement with new or cast stone material in the same way that window surrounds and sills were treated in the lower work. This kind of replacement requires enough bearing to support it.

The projecting cornices that relate to the inscription band and the large cornice beneath the balustrade of the south front, some of which have eroded to the point where support of large new stones is no longer possible, will have to be restored using lightweight glass fiber-reinforced concrete similar to the treatment of the upper cornice of the central facade. Close inspection of this new work shows that the materials are performing well, and the lead-coated copper flashings, not visible from below, are functioning well to seal the materials below from water penetration.

The addition of flashings on the horizontal surfaces is the major new element of the work, and, if properly designed, fabricated, and installed, should afford protection far into the future. Much of the most serious damage occurs beneath stones that are relatively intact, and is due to moisture penetration, freezing and thawing at the bottom where water tends to collect, rather than the tops of stones and moldings. This is why efforts to avoid penetration of water by sealing the exposed horizontal ledges is so important to halting further deterioration. One must think like a drop of water and always ask, "Where can I go?"

The conversion, repair, and restoration of the stonework, is, by its nature, painstakingly complex, as each stone must be evaluated and treated in the manner most appropriate to its condition and the physical reality of its location. We must halt the erosion of the structure if the building is to survive. Yet, like we have been able to do with the other aspects of the restoration of the Shrine, we will move cautiously and carefully to insure that the work we undertake will last—with necessary maintenance, and that the character and sense of history of the Shrine is preserved and celebrated in the process.



Ted Wofford examining West Tower from lift.



A striking difference: Unrestored dissolved stone surfaces between completed restored areas.

## Christmas Card Sales

**Donna Milligan**, head of the Christmas card project, reports that all 5,000 cards ordered, which featured the Shrine's main altar, were sold. "I want to extend my deep appreciation to everyone who purchased our cards and the volunteers who helped out with sales," said Donna. "This was our first year for this and the response was really quite gratifying."