

**OUR LADY QUEEN OF
PEACE**

IMLAY CITY

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
#4556**

***40TH
ANNIVERSARY***

1958

1998

**Little known facts about the
construction of our Hall.**

**As remembered by
Don Herron**

It was last August 1997 when Roy Leonard spoke to me about the Knight of the Year Party in February 1998. He said, it's also our 40th Anniversary – and you, being one of the old timers, would you serve on a committee to plan a program for the event.

I said sure, but there is John Adamic – a charter member, Mar 1958. I joined in Sept of '58. Tony Kreiner joined in 1961 and Douglas Kaufman 1959. These are the ones you see regularly at meetings – Bingo. There are also many other old timers who, because of health problems or whatever, are unable to attend, but they will be remembered by the hard work and many good deeds they did in the years gone by. – Thank you for your efforts.

I am thankful for the good health and the privilege to work on the many projects also on the construction of the building itself. I know just about how the building was put together.

15 years ago when we had our 25th anniversary party. Tony Kreiner was chairman and he did a very nice job of putting together, our Silver anniversary book.

We will use that as a guide and refer to it in helping us reminiscence, which may be of interest to you as we relate some of the stories.

Before we built the hall we held our meetings in the American Legion building in Imlay City.

1961 Vince Rosczewski was Grand Knight and was instrumental in getting a site for a building of our own. He passed away and never got to see his dream come true. The picture of him, you see in the Hall is a painting by Doris Solden from North Branch. She painted it from the little snapshot you see in the lower left-hand corner. I think she did a really nice job.

Now lets go back a bit to July 1966, when ground was broken for this building. The basement walls were up and the floor was poured. Then for some reason, which I do not know, there was a labor problem. Contractor Harold Robinson was left with no help.

It was on a Sunday afternoon, I was at the Family Picnic held here in the wooded area just south of the building. I asked Harold if he needed help and he said, "I sure do and if you know of anyone else that can help bring them along."

So that night, I talked to Walt Bauer, as we had been working together previously. The next day, we got things together and started laying the inside walls of the basement. When that was finished we started on the outside walls.

They were heavy 12" block. The footing was already poured, but the first 2 coursed were below ground level.

I am glad I don't have to do that today. It would probably never get done. By the way, we received \$4.00 per hour for our labor.

After a few days, two other block layers plus a mud man came. Now we had a full crew.

Hank, the mud man was a likeable person. He kept us well supplied and made our work much easier. We had the walls all up and the roof on before winter.

The roof, a so called flat roof, in which a heavy steel bridging was laid from north to south wall, then covered with a 4 inch thick dry wall type board. That was the base for a tarpaper roof that drained off the southwest corner. It had only a 16' x 8' opening for 5,500 sq. ft of roof surface.

It wasn't long, maybe 2 to 3 years when we had a leak in the back corner. Many attempts were made to correct the situation, but to no avail.

I can't recall the year, but I offered to repair the leak. I removed approximately 200 sq. ft of old roof and rebuilt it with a 32' x 8' drain opening. That lasted until 1984 when the new pitch roof was constructed.

Now that the building was all enclosed, the first job was to lay the floor in the big hall. Sand was brought in and spread via a small tractor with a front-end loader. The space adjacent to the west basement wall had to be backed filled.

As the floor over the basement was already poured and set, it was thought the wall was secure, but not so.

One day, someone went to the basement and discovered a big one inch crack almost the full length of the wall – oh-oh. The wall is pushing in! The sand had to be dug back out! I was given the job of pushing it back. I braced the center wall to the east outside wall. This way I could use that for support and push the west wall back. It was then re-enforced with steel rod and concrete.

With that, the wall held, but still today you can see where the crack was. A little more and we would have had a disaster!

It was probably late October when we poured the concrete floor in the big hall. The floor over the basement was already poured. The ground around the building was wet. The North parking lot was a mass of slippery clay. The trucks could get no closer than the edge of the slope out front. This was approximately 30 feet from the front door.

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This meant the only means of moving the concrete in, was by wheelbarrow. We had 5, Hank, our mud man, Walt Bauer who helped lay block, 2 other men, I can't remember and myself. Hank and I agreed, we would keep our turn but not going to run. There was this one young fellow, thought this was fun! He would sometimes pass us up on the return trip. (Remember it would be at least 180 feet from the truck to the Northwest corner where we started.)

We started at 7:00 a.m. and by noon, this youngster was sorely dragging his feet. He actually missed a few turns!~ ha-ha

The only breaks we had were one half hour at noon and the time it took for one truck to pull out and the next to back in.

One man did all the leveling with a 8' 2x4 – So if you notice a table rocks a bit, it's not the table that is bent. We had the entire floor (4,000 sq. ft) poured by 3:30 p.m.

The floor was then finished with a power trowel. By 4:00 p.m. the wheelbarrow brigade was finished for the day!!

INSIDE CONSTRUCTION

I always thought it would be nice to work a big building so you would have plenty of room. But, you know what? We were continually moving stuff because it was in the way!! I worked with three union men and I learned a lesson. One day we had to move a pile of 8 foot 2x4's the length of the hall. One man may carry 4 at a time, or 2 men can carry 2 – 2x4 – 16 footers. At the end, there were five 2x4 by 8 feet left. I picked up all 5 – and brought them down. I was reminded, you carry four – union rules. Another time, we were putting up insulation on the walls. One man was on the loader. Insulation in hand – breaktime – He dropped it and came down.

The outside walls of the main hall were stripped (vertically) with 2x2's, insulated with 2-inch insulation, then paneled.

Building materials were delivered via truck and we carried them into the hall where they were stacked. I don't remember all the details but those 16-ft drywall sheets were heavy!

When it came time to put them on the ceiling, we had a rolling scaffold. 2 men stood on the scaffold and two of us handed it up. They quick like hoisted it up, held it on their heads, until they got it nailed in place.

It wasn't long until they were putting pads in their caps as their heads were getting mighty sore!

THE TILE FLOOR

It was early spring 1967. The building was just about completed, when we laid the tile floor. It was a pretty marble design, pale green and yellow. Designed by Harold Robinson's wife.

Because of the cold weather it was a slow process and the 2nd day the other guys were complaining of sore knees. I didn't mind and on the 3rd day I finished up around the outside and it was cold. It looked nice but after maybe a week the corners began to loosen. Several members including myself thought the floor was lost. Harold told me when the weather warms the tile will go down—and sure enough it did. It lasted about 20 years after which it was removed and the present floor was put down in March of 1988.

THE WINDOWS

When the hall was originally built, there were three windows on each side. Aluminum frames with single glass. Needless to say they were cold so we made wood frames for the inside and covered them with Styrofoam and plastic for insulation. Because this was not appealing to the eyes, the ladies made curtains to cover the window. This was an improvement and after a few years the windows were replaced with glass block. These were pretty and let in a lot of light which was nice for a while. However, the parking lot was just gravel and the kids found enjoyment in throwing stones and the glass would go ping!! The glass block windows were replaced with cement block July 1983. I did the block laying. You can see from the outside where the windows used to be.

The front of the building had a big glass window where the trophy case is now. That too, for security reasons, was replaced with cement block and bricked to make it decorative.

STORAGE ROOM

In 1976 we built the additional storage area on the south side. Don Bertram was the man responsible for putting it together. It certainly has served us well over the years.

The steps from the front door to the driveway were designed and built by Frank Avander and myself around 1968. The top two steps settled out of shape and were replaced by Ray Pytleski around 1993.

Many of us will always remember Frank and Anna as being loyal and dedicated to the 3rd & 4th Degree Knights of Columbus.

NEW CEILING

After the new floor was down the ceiling looked shabby. I got an idea, if everyone would contribute \$5.00 for one ceiling tile, we could replace the ceiling and have a

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party afterwards. The response was overwhelming. Seventeen hundred dollars was raised. The ceiling cost approximately \$1,100.00. The rest of the money was put towards paneling the sidewalls and new lights. Ray Pytleski engineered this portion of the project in 1989.

PARKING LOT

The parking lot was graveled in 1968. Blacked topped in 1977 and redone in 1995.

BINGO

Bingo was started October 1968. Promoted by Lawrence Doherty and Mike Olekszyk. Lawrence Doherty, Mike Olekszyk, Don Mc Garry, Al Parsch, Pete Weingartz and Don Herron went to Davison Knights of Columbus Council to learn the ins and outs of such a project. We were the first in the area to sponsor Bingo. That was short lived, after a few months we were shut down. We did not have the proper credentials. After a short time we were able to resume and we had a very good response. Strange as it may seem, I was involved then and still enjoy working and playing the game today.

The present pitch roof was a big project completed in 1983. Tony Kreiner did a super job in coordinating members to help. The material was delivered then in one day, (Saturday) the rafters were all built. About two weeks later on a beautiful sunny day, volunteers came by the dozen (approximately 75 men). It was all completed that day except for about ½ of the shingles on the south side. They were finished the next day, Sunday. Ray Pytleski engineered the construction. The Ladies of Peace prepared the noon lunch on Saturday.

Well, that's about concludes the little stories that I thought you should know. I am happy to say I have been here since the beginning. I joined the 4th Degree in 1965. I have truly enjoyed it and have met so many wonderful people – like you. I shall always cherish your friendship.

I have received many plaques and honors over the years, Knight of the Year, Family of the year, Color Corp Commander. There is one I received in 1993 when Lou Fiege was Grand Knight. He got the idea to honor people who were the handymen around the council. Glenn Schmidt and I were the recipients. We were presented with a hammer painted gold and mounted on a special cut board with a label where our name was inscribed. It was called the "Gold Hammer Award". I was deeply impressed. This reminds me of the time we were laying block and I lost a hammer in the wall (right over there) and it's still there.

I wrote a story about it and gave it as a "Lectures" report at a meeting. This is the story-----this may be a bit repetitious but please bear with me.....

It was September 1968 when the K.C. hall in Imlay City began to take shape. The outside basement walls were up when progress stopped due to labor problems. While at a Sunday picnic, adjacent to the building site, I spoke to contractor Harold

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Robinson. I asked if he needed help. His quick reply was yes and if you know of anyone else that could help bring them along.

That evening I spoke to my friend Walt Bauer, who was experienced in block laying? The next morning we began the task. We did all the inside walls of the basement before we began the big job, the outside walls.

They were heavy 12" block and the first 2 courses were below ground level. It was hard back breaking work. We were on the 3rd or 4th course when two other block layers plus a mud man joined us. We completed the job. The roof was on and the building was all closed in before winter. We received \$4.00 per hour.

Now there is something else I must tell you. I always carried a heavy hammer in case a block needed to be taped in place. I was working on the south side about half way up when the line flipped my hammer down the hole and it's still there.

I was the only member of the council that worked on the construction. I also continued to work, throughout the winter, along with 3 union men to complete the construction.

Since that time, I have worked on many other projects. Sometimes with others, but many times by myself. Not for money, honor or glory but just because I enjoyed doing it. Sometimes there was a need for something to be built, but no blueprints. It was a challenge and somehow I always seemed to be successful. And now, to receive this hammer award, something I never dreamed of, but I think it's great. Now I have my hammer back and it has turned to Gold!! So, as Paul Harvey would say "Now you know the rest of the story"

**Sincerely,
Don**