

In Search of Lost Graves

Illinois Knights spearhead a project to locate unmarked remains in a historic Catholic cemetery

By Cecilia Engbert

Several Knights from Twin City Council 891 assembled for a work day in St. Mary's Cemetery in Champaign, Illinois, early one morning this past September. Not for the first time — Council 891 has been maintaining and improving the historic Catholic cemetery for several years, honoring the dead who are buried there and giving comfort to their families.

This work day, however, the Knights were trading rakes and shovels for something more high-tech: ground-penetrating radar.

St. Mary's contains more than 3,000 headstones, but the Knights suspected that numerous graves in the 157-year-old cemetery are unmarked, either because a marker was never placed or because the marker has been stolen or destroyed by natural elements.

That's why Council 891 decided to bring in radar experts. Scanning under the surface of the 12-acre plot with ground-penetrating radar would allow the Knights to create a comprehensive underground map of St. Mary's Cemetery.

"Our goal is to have some good records to show where people are actually buried," said Denny Santarelli, a member of Council 891 involved in the mapping project. "This will give us the ability to check our paper records against this actual map and see how accurate they are."

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Minutes of the November Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM on November 14, 2023 by Grand Knight Machovec. Guest DD Morris was present at the meeting. The Deputy Grand Knight, Chancellor, Trustee Three Year and Trustee One Year were excused. Roll call followed our Chancellor leading us in prayer. The Warden led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes from October were approved as written.

Membership Report

On Tuesday November 21 after the 6PM mass there will be an exemplification for Candidates George Hoover, Aaron Campoy and Shawn Simpson.

Grand Knight Report

GK Machovec confirmed that checks will be prepared and ready for distribution on Giving Tuesday. Bro Swift will present the donations.

All Brothers are invited to the planning meetings, typically held on the first Wednesday of each month at St Pats at 5:30PM.

Chaplain's Report

No report

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November Meeting Minutes**Continued from page 1:****Treasurer Report**

Checking account balance - \$11,837.15

Financial Secretary Report

Income – \$65 dinner, \$0 – 50/50

Bills- Brother Trassare - \$84.68 – desert for Bro Bowling's Funeral, Brother Strazzo - \$124.95 Hospitality Sunday donuts. Brother Watt – \$59.40 – Drinks, appreciation dinner

Communications

A thank you note was received from the Pastor at St. Andrews church for the financial donation to the construction of a memorial to aborted babies completed this month by Brother Knights.

Programs Director Report

Wine and cheese first Saturday after the 5PM Mass. First Tuesday night of the month 5:30 Rosary. November host is the Knights of Columbus. Every second Sunday the Council sponsors donuts after the 10:00 mass. Volunteers are needed to help set up, serve and clean up. Scholarship applications are due at the end of December. Help is needed to set up, serve, break down and clean up at Deacon Ed's Funeral on November 20. Tootsie roll drive – update – donations are still coming in. Mass for departed Knights – There were 8 Brothers in attendance. December 15 is the scheduled date for the Christmas party. A Chairman is needed to make this event successful.

Unfinished Business

The St. Vincent De Paul Society was the recipient of Deacon Ed's clergy appreciation financial gift.

New Business

It was M/S/A to pay the bills. A Chairman is needed for the Christmas party scheduled for December 15. Guests were admitted into the meeting room. Two members of the youth group made a presentation and asked that the Council consider donating to

cook and provide a tri tip, Alfredo pasta, dinner rolls and salad for the Winter Formal Dinner Dance to be held at SKD on January 13. 100 youth are expected to attend.

Advocate Report

No report

Chancellor Report

No report

Insurance Agent Report

The agent is Dave Moeller

Vocations Report

No report

Fourth Degree Assembly

No report

District Deputy Report

DD Morris gave a brief report. November 8 is the Chapter Meeting, and forms 185 and 365 need to be turned in to Supreme.

Good of the Order

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Deacon Ed and John Bowling. Pray also for Deacon Jaime, Gary Simms, Fr. Arlon, Steve Oneto, and Fr. Relihan.

Lecturer Report

The lecturer provided information on the human trafficking occurring in this nation and around the world.

Chaplain's Summation

The meeting was closed in prayer.

GK Machovec closed the meeting at 7:58.

Respectfully submitted by David Sanders

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The Knights got in touch with Bill Vavrik, a senior vice president with the engineering firm Applied Research Associates. Vavrik, who is Catholic, was eager to get on board with the project, and he also suggested recruiting physics students from the High School of St. Thomas More in Champaign to help make the scan and analyze the resulting data.

On Sept. 9, the Knights and the high school students spent about eight hours driving ARA's radar equipment, hitched to a utility terrain vehicle, over almost every inch of the cemetery grounds. The radar was set to detect objects, or even variations in the soil, about 6 feet below the surface.

"[The radar] will map out every inch-and-a-half by 6 feet and pick up anything that's there," explained Bob Pratten, another member of Council 891. "It can pick up whether ground was at one time disturbed 6 feet under; it's that sensitive."

With the scan complete, the students are now analyzing the data, which must be done manually. The Knights hope to have the completed map by the end of the year, and their next step will be to compare the map to cemetery records and a surface map created in 2022.

"Where the records show no burial, maybe the underground map will show remnants of a burial," Pratten said. "We may not be able to find exactly who it is, but at least we'll know it's occupied."

It's all part of the local Knights' wider efforts to care for the cemetery — efforts that began in 2019, when Knights noticed that the graves in the children's section were poorly marked and overgrown. They organized several cleanup days, inviting local council members and other volunteers from scout-

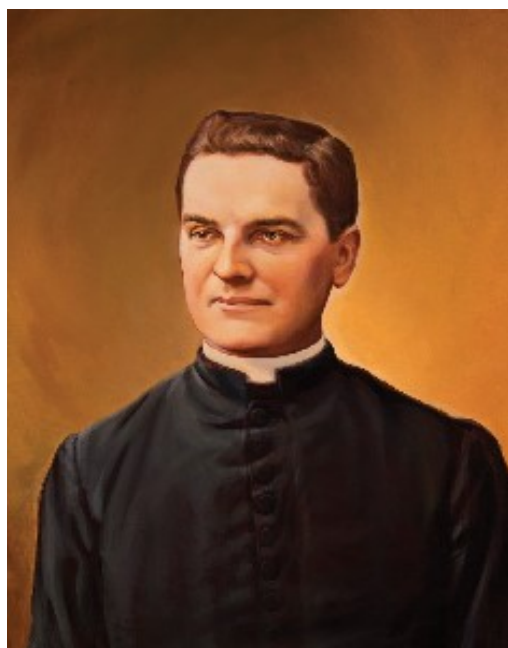
ing organizations, Catholic schools, local businesses and the parish community to pitch in. Since then, the Knights have formed a special planning group devoted to maintaining the cemetery.

Local Knights hold cleanup days three to four times a year, and Santarelli estimates that more than 2,000 volunteer hours have gone into trimming bushes and trees, pulling weeds, leveling graves, repairing headstones, installing signs and flagpoles, and removing or replacing old fences. The work that the Knights cannot do themselves, they raise money to have completed.

"The Knights are always looking for a project to bring the council together, and a Catholic cemetery is a really good one," Pratten said. "It started with the children's section, but one thing led to another and now here we are — first an above-ground map, then a below-ground map. And there's a long list of things to continue to do."

One project that Champaign-area councils have been working for the last several years is an "Avenue of Flags." Their goal is to line all the streets of the cemetery with flagpoles, and they have raised the funds to install 55 so far. The U.S. flag and the flags of the U.S. military services are raised on every major patriotic holiday; for the past two years, the Knights have also organized a Memorial Day Mass in the cemetery.

"The people that have family members buried here at the cemetery are so excited about the work we've done," Santarelli said. "We just want to improve the cemetery the best we can and make it into a respectful place for prayer and reflection. We are proud of what we have accomplished."



Prayer for the Canonization of Blessed Michael McGivney Founder of the Knights of Columbus God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Blessed Michael McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor. Through the example of his life and virtue, may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling his commandment of charity and building up his Body which is the Church. Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify Blessed Michael McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will. Through his intercession, grant the favor I now present (here make your request). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dinner Hosts

Dan Placido Dec 12

Bob Strazzo January 9

TBD Feb 13

The Officers of Council 1849

Grand Knight Justin Machovec

Spiritual Advisor Deacon Jaime Garcia

Deputy G.K. Matthew Waverly

Chancellor Phil Gonzalez

Warden Jacob Schmidt

Treasurer Bob Strazzo

Recorder Dave Sanders

Advocate Mark Koenig

Inside Guard Mark Watt

Outside Guard Charlie Esola

Trustees

Three Year Stephen Frias

Two Year Joe Trassare

One Year Jack Magee

Financial Sec. Tim Burr

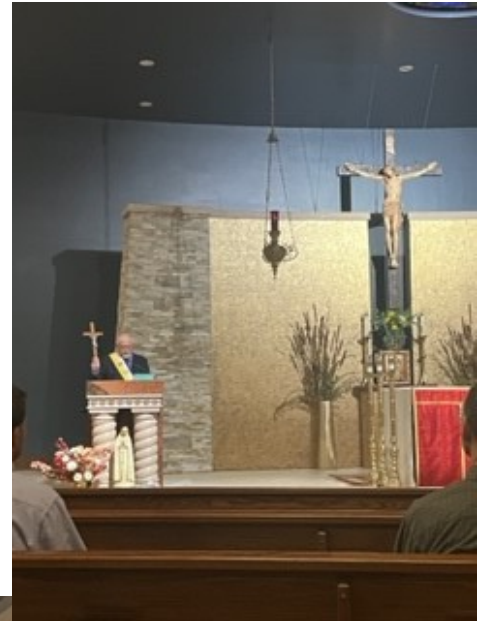
Dist. Deputy Steven Morris

Field Agent David Moeller

All Council Officers (except Br. Charlie Esola) can be reached by email. Use the first letter of their first name, the entire last name, followed by: @kofc-1849.org

Sample: mkoenig@kofc-1849.org

Council 1849 Exemplification





Knights of Columbus Council 1849

Events Calendar 2023—2024

Planning meetings at Saint Patrick's Hall, first Wednesday at 6:00 PM of every month, starting July 2023 until June 2024.

Monthly Business meetings at Saint Katharine Drexel (St. Teresa of Calcutta Room) on 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 PM, starting July 2023 until June 2024. Dinner at 6:00 PM.

Family Fishing Day, Silver Lake, July 1st, 2023

Installation Mass and Picnic, SKD 10 AM August 20, 2023 (3rd Sunday)

Summer Dinner (Tri-tip), at SKD after 5PM Mass September 30, 2023 (5th Saturday)

Clergy Appreciation Dinner, Mark and Nancy Koenig Residence 5:00 PM September 17, 2023

Tootsie Roll Drive, weekend of October 13, 14, 15, 2023

Mass for Departed Knights, SKD 10 AM November 12, 2023 (2nd Sunday)

Christmas Party, SKD 6 PM, December 15, 2023 (3rd Friday)

Winter Dinner (Fish), SKD 6:30 PM February 3, 2024 (1st Saturday)

Family Potluck, SKD 6:00 PM March 26, 2024 (4th Tuesday)

Spring Dinner (Ribs), SKD 6:30 PM April 20, 2024 (3rd Saturday)

Family Potluck, SKD 6:00 PM May 18, 2024 (3rd Saturday)

Hospitality Donuts every 2nd Sunday at SKD

Hospitality Wine and Cheese every 1st weekend Vigil Mass at SKD

Rosary before 10 AM Mass, SKD every 5th Sunday of months with 5 Sunday

KVGC Rosary Tuesday before the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 at SKD – St. Maximillian Kolbe Room

December Calendar of Events

Tuesday, December 5: Knights KVGC Rosary at Saint Katharine Drexel after the 6:00 PM Mass

Wednesday, December 6: Planning Meeting at Saint Patrick's Hall at 6:00 PM.

Sunday, December 10: Knights Donut Sunday at Saint Katharine Drexel after the 10:00 AM Mass.

Tuesday, December 12: Business Meeting at Saint Katharine Drexel. Dinner at 6 PM. Meeting at 7 PM.

Friday, December 15: Christmas Party at Saint Katharine Drexel at 6:00 PM.

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Published Monthly. All news items may be emailed to news@kofc-1849.org. Photos need to be jpeg, set at no less than 150 dpi, and no larger than 800kb; send photo files to mews@kofc-1849.org. @Amador County Council 1849 Knights of Columbus, December 2023, P.O. Box 1436, Sutter Creek, Ca 95685

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