



President's Message—Jim Keller

INDUSTRIAL PARK: The continued building construction in the Industrial park is most gratifying. Several buildings are in various stages of completion. These businesses will provide excellent services to our area and increase our local commerce. We continue to be most grateful to the business owners who are committing their resources to this community.

PRE SCHOOL: The preschool classes conducted at Marion Local are totally funded by student tuition and fundraisers. This approach has kept the operation financially viable since its inception. Due to a number of factors it appears that keeping the school funded with desirable teacher/student ratios will be a challenge this year and going forward. The preschool board met on 11/23 to discuss the situation. ML superintendent Mike Pohlman joined part of the meeting and committed his and the school board's support. Thanks Mike. To ascertain the thoughts of the community, Maria Rethman, the preschool coordinator, will be sending out parent surveys after the first of the year. We encourage those receiving the survey to complete and return them. Your input will give us guidance as to how to continue to provide this most valuable service to our community. In the meantime the MCDO thanks Maria and her staff for the "labor of love" they unselfishly provide to our children.

AGRICULTURE: Since early 2011, the MCDO has been intensely involved in a Ag Solutions, a group that was formed to address the negative impact farming practices can have on the environmental health of Grand Lake St. Marys. A key goal of the group was to improve the lake while maintaining and even growing our farm economy. This is a big and important undertaking, one that has grown beyond me and the MCDO. I personally, and our organization, will be phasing out of our involvement in that effort. My concern with taking that step is that the mission of Ag Solutions will continue to be pursued. I've attended a couple of meetings recently with various stakeholders in this effort and I'm convinced that the work will continue.

LEADERSHIP: The MCDO started in the early 1990's with a ton of energy and vision. That early enthusiasm faded over the years and by 2007 the organization was barely surviving. That is not the case today, but we could use an energetic, visionary president. We need a person who cares deeply about this area and who has ideas about how the MCDO can help our community grow in positive directions. If you have an interest in filling this role, please contact either Shannon Everman or myself.

Marion Local Schools—Mike Pohlman

The first half of the 2015-2016 school year is almost complete and our students have performed well in the classroom and in their extra-curricular activities. The weather has been unseasonably warm this December, but fog has created some visibility issues in the morning. As many of you noticed we started using a texting notification system along with phone calls. At times I may use both ways to communicate a message but please be aware that I am limited to the amount of characters I can type in a text. With longer messages I will solely rely on the phone messages through our "One Call Now system". I hope you find this system of communication a convenience as a parent when receiving valuable information about the school.

Recently we ended the period for receiving survey results for our facility study. I want to thank everyone for your input as we now work to make decisions on how to proceed. The goal of the Board of Education and administration is to make decisions in the best interest of our students' education while being fiscally responsible with your tax dollars. A well rounded education doesn't just include core courses, but elective courses along with extra-curricular activities that help shape the students into productive young adults. I ask that everyone remain patient since this process is not something that should be rushed into. Thank you for supporting our district with your insight as we seek to give our students wonderful educational opportunities that many previous generations provided for us.

Go Flyers!

Marion Township Park—Ron Hartings

Marion Community Park Board meets monthly, which is typically the 3rd week of the month. We continue to focus on improving and maintaining the park for our community. Your continued support is appreciated throughout the year!

Fundraisers help support the park improvements and maintenance. We thank all of those who have donated time, money, and energy in support! Thank you!

Some of those funds are being used by the Park Board for completion of some Eagle Scout projects. We thank Alex Partington for assisting with the clearing of some of the dead Ash trees recently as well as Tim Knapschaefer on the work to erect the scoreboard as well as landscaping at its base. Plans are to try to have it serviceable for next year's ball season.

This fall, the parking lot has been sealed and striped. This will help to maintain and enhance the safety as well as to utilize the parking lot to its capacity.

As a reminder, there are always "Donor Bricks" available for purchase with 2 lines of copy engraved for \$50. It is donor's choice as to what they would like engraved. Send check and notes for engraving/contact information to Marion Township Park, PO Box 12, Maria Stein, OH 45860. Bricks are placed surrounding the shelter house.

We would also like to welcome a new Park Board member, Nick "Shaggy" Pavelka. Many of the Park Board members are new over the past year, and Nick will be a great addition as well.

If you have suggestions for the park's future, we welcome those discussions. Current Park Board Members include: Ron Hartings (President – 937-638-0534), Eric Schroeder (Eagle Scout project manager – 419-296-8570 - ***If you are a scout looking for a project, there has been some discussion about possible projects. Please contact.***), Nancy Billerman (419-733-8668), Keith Pohl-

mann (rentals – 567-644-5818), Shelly Bruns (Treasurer – 419-305-8940), Nick "Shaggy" Pavelka (419-852-3858) & Shelly Hartings (Secretary/Concessions stand 419-953-2569). Please feel free to contact.

301 Club—Cory Albers

The 301 Club is currently in the middle of the 2016 membership drive. We are reminding anyone who has not already renewed to please consider doing so by returning your renewal form and payment at your earliest convenience. If you have not received a renewal form in the mail or would like to become a member, please contact Cory Albers through email at Cory.Albers@hotmail.com, by phone at 419-733-3057 or any of the other committee members (Greg Nietfeld, Darrin Poeppelman, Kurt Goette-moeller, Jason Winner, Eric Eyink, Craig Everman, Kirk Stucke, or Mitch Thobe).

Membership is \$50, as it always has been, and enters you into a weekly drawing of \$100. All members are randomly selected to win each week resulting in 52 - \$100 winners. Membership also entitles you to the appreciation party on January 15 after the boys' basketball home game vs. St. Henry. Food and drinks are provided for all members and their families.

We would like to thank the 200+ members who have already renewed and look forward to seeing all of the 2016 members at the annual appreciation party. Members can also renew the night of the party. As in the past, prizes will be awarded throughout the night.

The 301 Club is a non-profit group that has been actively supporting Marion youth programs and our local parks since 1996. Our goal is to help sustain active programs and the development of our parks. Our community and kids benefit and appreciate all your generosity.



Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics—

Don Rosenbeck

A Year of Reflection and Celebration: This new year of 2016 begins a year of reflection and celebration as we prepare to celebrate the 170th year of the Precious Blood Sister's locating in Maria Stein. On September 24, 1846 the Sisters moved into the newly erected Maria Stein Convent. Earlier in 1844, Fr. Brunner had brought Sisters, Priests, and Brothers to America to where convents were to be built close to parishes so the Sisters could pray for and minister to the German settlers of the area. Later in 1875, Father J.M. Gartner entrusted his collection of relics to the Sisters because of war and unrest in Europe. The Relic Chapel was built in 1892 to house the collection with the primary display of over 1000 relics in hand carved altars.

The Sisters of the Precious Blood have maintained the Maria Stein Shrine of the Holy Relics as a legacy to be shared with others both now and for future generations. On behalf of the staff and many volunteers at the Shrine, we welcome everyone to visit the Maria Stein Shrine and grounds to share in this year of reflection and celebration.

The Shrine, the Heritage Museum and Pilgrim Gift Shop are open seven days a week: Monday thru Thursday 9:30-6:00; Friday & Saturday 9:30-4:00 and Sunday noon to 4:00. Tours of the Shrine are available and may be scheduled by calling the Shrine at 419-925-4532.



The Spiritual Center—Robin Goettoemoeller

We are thankful for the area Boy and Girl Scouts that choose the Spiritual Center of Maria Stein as a place to complete their Eagle Scout or Gold Awards! In the past year, three local Scouts have done amazing things here! Shelby Pleiman earned her Gold Award by repainting 12 bedrooms and bathrooms with warmer colors, and by choosing artwork and bedspreads for each room. She also helped at a summer camp by teaching young people about colors. Derek Pierron completed his Eagle Scout award by removing the old sign by the parking lot and building a new structure that included an electronic sign. He worked with the Spiritual Center staff to be sure they were trained to update the sign, and landscaped the entire area as well. Logan Brunswick completed his Eagle Scout award by building a beautiful dock at the edge of the pond. He also poured a new sidewalk that leads right up to the dock. Many thanks to these three hardworking youth! We look forward to seeing what projects and ideas are brought to the Spiritual Center in 2016 from area Scouts. Stop by anytime to see all of their hard work!



MCDO Memberships—Bob Dippold

It is time for the **MCDO 2016 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!** All annual memberships are due in January 2016. Below you will find the 2016 membership form. Membership for the year is \$15.00 for a family and \$60.00 for a business. Please contact Bob Dippold (419) 305-0128 or Shannon Everman (419) 925-5707 or email to admin@marioncommunities.com if you have any questions about the status of your membership. We greatly appreciate your support. Thank you to all renewed and new members!

2016 MCDO Membership Form

Business Membership \$60.00 _____

Family Membership \$15.00 _____

Please indicate if you would like a receipt for tax deduction: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to: Marion Community Development Organization

Please send remittance to: MCDO - PO Box 65 - Maria Stein, OH 45860-0065



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