

## St. Charles School – Coldwater, Mich.



St. Charles School in Coldwater, Mich., opened in 1911 with five IHM Sisters and 85 students enrolled in grades one through eight. The high school opened in 1913, and the first senior class graduated in 1916.

The students at St. Charles enjoyed many school activities, such as plays and musicals; festive holiday dinners; and giving gifts to the parish pastor each Christmas, which was followed by a visit from Santa. Another favorite activity was the annual Halloween Parade Float Contest, for which they won cash and prizes. They were winners in other contests as well, earning multiple safety awards through the years.

Along with a rigorous curriculum, the students at St. Charles participated in sports, with the school's basketball team enjoying many victories over the years. In February 1953, the grade school basketball team won the City Championship, and the convent chronicler proudly writes, "Their trophy is coveted by the rest of the school."

Increased enrollment in the early 1950s led to remodeling and rearranging space, beginning in 1953. Two classrooms were erected in the gymnasium, and the next year, "A further partition of the former gym made a room available for study, and for a ninth grade homeroom. What served for a study room last year became a seventh grade homeroom." The school saw another expansion in 1959 when a new classroom opened in the gym building.



During the 1962-63 school year, students participated in activities sponsored by the American Legion. Sister Barbara's fifth-graders distinguished themselves by winning prizes for the Poppy Poster Contest. Sister Lucretia's senior English class wrote three prize-winning essays for the essay contest.

The chronicler notes that 1964, our **Featured Class Year**, "was marked by unusual sports achievements which heightened student enthusiasm considerably. After winning the District Basketball Tournament, the team was finally defeated by a 51-50 score by Covert." The team and student body demonstrated "good sportsmanship."

In April 1964, the students had a science fair, and later that month, the students in grades one through four put on a play; the seniors were responsible for props and artistic organization.



On Sept. 16, 1966, fire broke out at St. Charles School, and "the course of our lives and that of the school was suddenly and seriously altered." Following the fire, grades five and six and their teachers went to Edison School. Grades nine-12 were housed in St. Mark's Episcopal Sunday School building. The remainder of the student body was able to continue classes at St. Charles.

Sadly, the end of the 1966-67 school year brought the closing of the high school; grades seven and eight were dropped in 1969 due to low enrollment.

In 1971, the school went to multi-aging classrooms and individualized instructions, which parents praised. The school continued to thrive academically, and during the 1973-74 school year, many students

won awards at the Declamation Contest. Teachers and students continued to take pride in the aesthetics of their school as well, painting Snoopy characters on the walls of the second floor hallways.

The school remains open for preschool through grade five.

## 1964 Year in Review

### Politics/News



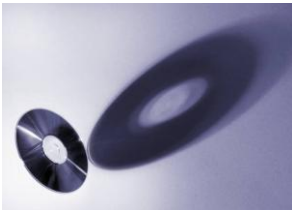
- Incumbent United States President Lyndon B. Johnson defeated Republican challenger Barry Goldwater with more than 60 percent of the popular vote.
  - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway.
  - The U.S. Surgeon General reported that smoking may lead to lung cancer.
  - A young, loud, talented boxer named Cassius Clay won the Boxing World heavyweight championship from Sonny Liston.
- The most powerful earthquake in U.S. history, a magnitude of 9.2, struck Alaska.

### Movies/Television



- The one-hour stop-motion animated special *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, based on the popular Christmas song, premiered on NBC. It became a beloved Christmas tradition, still shown on television more than 40 years later.
  - *My Fair Lady* and *Mary Poppins* were released.
  - Sidney Poitier became the first black actor to win the "best actor" Oscar

### Music



- The Beatles made their first appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and had 13 singles on Billboard's Hot 100 at the same time. They took the world and America by storm and Beatlemania went into overdrive as they released a series of number one hits including "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and "All My Loving."
  - Other British groups also found success including The Rolling Stones, which released the debut album, *The Rolling Stones*.

### In the United States...



- The average annual income was \$6,000.
- Gas was 30 cents per gallon.
- The average cost of a new car was \$3,500.
- A loaf of bread cost 21 cents.
- A first-class stamp cost 5 cents.
- Average monthly rent was \$115.
- A ticket to the movies cost \$1.25.