

What I remember of my schools with the Montreal Catholic School Commission

St-Anselm and St. Brendan

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I first attended St-Anselm School in 1944-45. I was too young to be registered but my mother knew the teacher, Mrs. Yespelkis. It was at this time that I met Ed Gargul. This class was bilingual, English and Polish and my paternal grandmother wanted me to go to school so I could learn Polish. (Didn't work!)

I returned the following year and had the same teacher but somehow managed to get out of the Polish bit.

My second grade teacher in 1946-47 was Sister Vincent, a kind Ukrainian sister.

Grade three saw me with two teachers, first Ms. Lasoski before Christmas, at St. Anselm's and then Mr. Guy Mackenzie for the second half of the year at St. Brendan's. The principal was Mr. Mike Dunn and the janitor was Mr. Burke. We feared the janitor the most.

The thing I remember most about this year is that Ms. Lasowski pulled ears and when I got to St. Brendan's school, Mr. Mackenzie asked me to read so he could see what reading skills I had. In Ms Lasowski's class, we were taught to read "with feeling" while at St. Brendan's, with an all boys class, I was very embarrassed. Years later, Mr. Mackenzie and I taught together.

At this time the grade 1 teacher was Ms. LaSalle and the grade 2 teacher was Helen Lyng, with whom I also taught later. Helen Lyng was part of the large clan of teaching Lyngs.

Grade 4 my teacher was Mike Feely, a very nice gentleman who loved soccer.

Grade 5, my teacher was Mr. Pat Murphy, an excellent teacher who went on to Pius X later on as a math teacher. Mr. Murphy had an artificial leg and would go up and down the rows "kneeing" those who were misbehaving. He used to carry a stub of a pointer and would constantly rub off the blood of his last victim yet I never saw him use it. 1949 was the year that the old building on Rosemount Blvd. was re-opened. If I remember correctly there were two floors of classrooms plus the basement, and it seems to me that there were only 4 classes in the whole building. I think the school yard was paved about this time as before this it was very fine gravel.

Grade 6, the teacher was Mr. Ed Levens. Mr. Levens had a large board with everyone's name on a grid. We were given daily marks for everything we did and these were totaled up at the end of the day. One of the components was homework for which we got 10 points. When the homework was picked up in the morning, I quite often had an excuse that I didn't underline the date, JMJ, etc and I'd bring it up later. Later never came and when the books were returned and the roll read to get the

marks, I'd give myself a 7 or so, so as not to raise suspicion. There was also a row for "conducts." If you got 5 or more "conducts" during the day, you got a penance. I believe that Mr. Levens later became a school board officer at the Baldwin Cartier Board.

Grade 7, my teacher was Joe Turner, who was an excellent teacher and who taught me French later at Cardinal Newman High School. Mr. Turner retired as an elementary principal with the MCSC and later was the manager of the FESCT Credit Union.

In Grades 5 through, we had French instruction from a Mr. Filteau. Mr. Filteau was one of the authors of the Filteau-Villeneuve French system of charts. This system remained in use well into the 60's.

As for the physical aspect of the school, I remember the hardwood floors that were given a dose of Javel each summer and Christmas holiday .The city building across 9th Ave was built about 1950. At about the same time, Rosemount School was changed to Nesbitt School as the PSBGM was opening Rosemount High School on Beaubien and the changed the elementary school to Nesbitt to avoid confusion.

When more schools were built in Rosemount, eventually the old building became St. Brendan's Occupational Center.

During this period there was another grade 5 teacher, but I managed to avoid him. His name was Pat McKeever. McKeever was queer duck who sprouted Latin and Greek to the kids and didn't mind if they didn't understand him. He was in charge of the altar boys at St. Brendan. You usually were recruited when you were in grade five, first to serve as acolytes at the high Mass on Sunday and eventually trained to be a real altar boy when you learned the Latin responses. Highlights of being an altar boy were getting to school late after the 8:00 am Mass and going to buy Father McManus's cigarettes. Cigarettes were 37 cents a pack then and he'd ask you to buy two packs and let you keep the change from a dollar. Father Mc also sometimes drove us to school in his yellow Cadillac convertible. One of the perks of being an altar boy was the annual "reward." The reward was a day at Belmont Park paid for by Father McManus. As Pat McKeever was in charge of deciding who was to be rewarded, he made sure to find some reason anyone presently in grade 7 had committed a faux pas. Of course the consequence was that you did not go to Belmont Park because you were of no use to him the following year, as you'd be in high school and not be at his beck and call.