

## The Parish in the New Millennium: Fr. Carley Sports Field

*This is part 9 of a 12 part series about our parish history which we are running in the bulletin to celebrate our 50th anniversary year. Parts 1 through 4 focused on building a new parish. Parts 5 thru 8 centered on parish people. The year 2000 brought a new priest, Fr. Patrick Carley and many new parish developments. These last 4 articles will focus on the parish in the new millennium. This article covers the development of Father Carley Field.*

“Useless” and “Burdensome”. These were the words that came to Father Carley’s mind when he first came to St. Joseph the Worker and saw the 6 1/2 acres of land behind the rectory. It had been years since anything was grown on it, yet it still took money and labor to keep it mowed and watered. It was wasted space, not used for anything. Too uneven to walk on, wild critters often made it their home. With his lifelong love of sports, Fr. Carley envisioned the field transformed into a family-friendly sports complex with soccer fields and a baseball diamond. “What a great way to build a stronger sense of community here at this parish!” he thought. With a dedicated group of volunteers and a few years of hard work, his dream became a reality.

When the parish originally bought the church property in 1963, the acreage was purchased for a Catholic school, but the school just never came to be. According to Sr. Fabian, there was a time when the Diocese talked of turning the field into a Catholic cemetery. Thankfully, the water table was too high for this to happen. For many years the field was simply rented out for growing hay and, for a time, there were gardens grown in it. After awhile and for many years the field lay dormant and no one quite knew what to do with it. It wasn’t until the year 2000 when Father Carley came to the parish that a solid plan for the field was developed. It took a few years before the actual work got started. First of all, the open ditches on the



Above: The field used to be lined with “trash” trees and an open ditch.

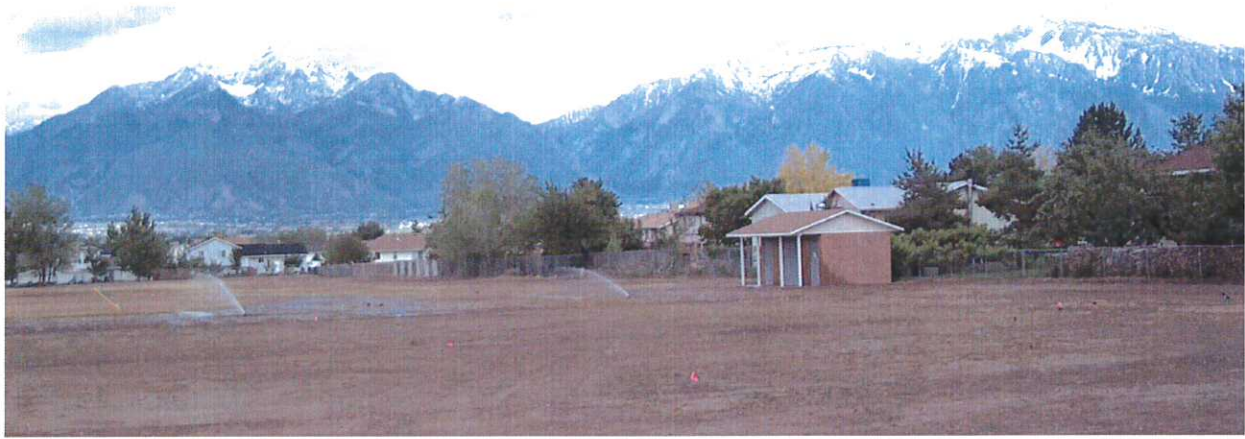


In the summer of 2004, volunteers removed the trees, laid a pipe in the ditch and leveled field.

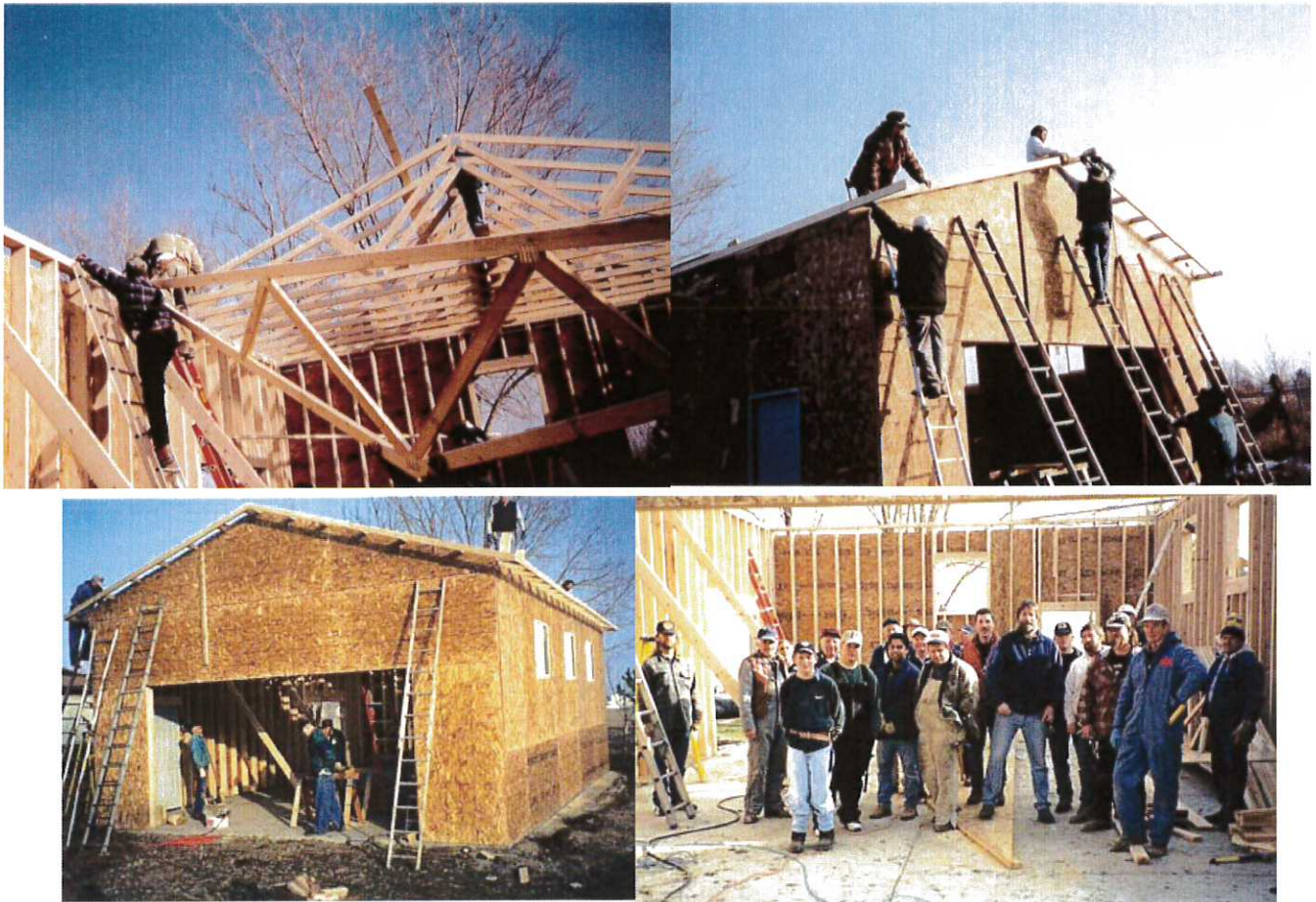
borders of the field needed to be covered up for the safety of the children who would be playing on the field. Trees that grew close to the ditch needed to be removed. Even though they were only “trash trees”, their removal caused alarm among many of our neighbors because they had provided nice shade in their yards for so many years. After the trees were removed, an irrigation pipe was laid and the ditches were covered up.

The next job was to level the uneven field and to build restroom facilities. Later on, sprinklers were laid and grass was planted. Then came the baseball diamond, then came the horseshoe pits. Parishioners got used to hearing, “All proceeds will go towards the development of our Sports Field”. But slowly, the field became more and more a great useable space.

By 2005, the field was officially blessed and dedi-



cated at the Founders Day picnic. Special guest Steve Garvey, formerly of the Los Angeles Dodgers, attended and praised the multisports, multi-use community gathering space. That same year, a new pavilion for picnics, reunions and other gatherings was built. In honor of his great efforts the field was officially named Father Carley Field at the 2008 Founders Day picnic. The 6 1/2 acre field is now a priceless treasure for the parish.



Around the same time that the field was being developed, there were some other changes to the grounds at St. Joseph the Worker. A much-needed storage shed, located just south of the convent (now the rectory) was built by the men of the parish. This shed provides storage space for large equipment as well as festival supplies.



### **Yellow House Comes Down**

In 2004, the old yellow home located at the corner of Redwood Road and Bora Bora went up for sale. The parish snatched this up, even though it seemed very expensive at the time at \$150,000. There were preliminary plans to turn the house into a Thrift Shop, but these were dropped once it was discovered that the home had problems with wiring and asbestos, and the home was demolished. The garage behind the house continued to stand and was used for parish storage until December 2009 when it was demolished. This property has grown tremendously in value to the parish and was especially useful when it came time to build a new church.

### **Playground Goes Up**

One of the first major projects that the Women's Group, newly formed in May 2004 and later called the W.O.W.s, took on was to raise funds for the construction of a playground to be located in the newly developed sports field. You may be shocked to know that the cost of a playground such as ours exceeded \$18,000.

In the fall of 2005 the women organized the first ever silent auction. It was called "Wish Upon A Star" and their goal was to raise funds for the playground. They also set out a little wishing well and parishioners would drop their spare change— all proceeds going to the playground. In April 2006, children and parents rejoiced when the new playground was finally built! See a full series of photos in the Gathering Space!



This is an interesting drawing that we only recently found. We believe it is circa early 1970's. It shows an early plan for the field that includes a future church, a school, a playground and lots of parking. This original drawing as well as many other architectural drawings of the parish will be stored in our parish archives.

Res. Relocated

Rectory

Existing Church

Future Church

Playground

Future School

Social Hall

