

Grand Knight's Message

Worthy Brothers:

Approximately one year ago, you demonstrated your confidence by electing me as your next Grand Knight. As your Grand Knight, I established three primary goals:

1. Lead the Council out of the pandemic.
2. Make meaningful contributions to our community.
3. Grow our membership.

With your support and assistance, we have met each of these goals.



GK Ivan Gralic

Lead the Council: Our Council is constantly buzzing with activity. Highlights include hosting an amazing group of Special Olympians for dinner and outfitting the team with new softball uniforms; sponsoring two youth chess tournaments; hosting the annual members Thanksgiving dinner; conducting a Memorial Mass to honor members and friends we've lost; conducting the campaign for people with intellectual disabilities (aka the Tootsie Roll program), which raised \$1,000 for charity; and, hosting several well-attended fish fry's during Lent.

Meaningful Contributions: The Council made over **\$5,000** in charitable donations throughout the year. We hosted several food drives in support of the United States Soldiers and Sailors of America, and hosted blood drives to support the Red Cross. As well, the Scholarship Committee is poised

to award O'Hara scholarships for the 2022-2023 school year to students who meet the program's eligibility criteria. Last, after a short hiatus due to COVID, the Council resumed the popular Teachers Appreciation Program to recognize the important contributions made by teachers in our Parish schools.

Grow our Membership: During the year, we not only met, but we **exceeded** our annual membership quota! We hosted four well-attended New Member Exemplification Ceremonies. As well, we took advantage of a one-time opportunity afforded by the Knights of Columbus (KoC) to optimize our membership roster and reduce our on-going costs by transferring inactive members to a new Council administered at KoC headquarters; these members may re-join our Council upon becoming current with their annual dues payments.

I would like to thank each of you for your support during the past year. None of this is possible without your contributions. The Rock Creek Council is stronger than ever and I look forward to seeing you around the Council!

Vivat Jesus!

Teaching in the Time of Covid

Interview conducted and edited by Jim Tise

Matt Dugan has taught 5th and 6th grade students at St. Jane de Chantal Elementary School since 2010. A graduate of Blessed Sacrament and Gonzaga High School, he graduated with a degree in visual arts from the College of the Holy Cross. He went on to earn his Masters in education from Notre Dame of Maryland. With the pandemic (hopefully) on the decline and mask and social distancing mandates eased, Matt took the time to answer some questions about what it was like teaching in the time of Covid.

What got you interested in being a teacher?

I think what started me in this profession was seeing the joy my oldest brother, John, got from working as a teacher at Mater Dei. I started coaching football with friends after graduating college and appreciated how much I got from it, how much fun it was. And so I later pursued positions in education and landed a job teaching fifth and sixth grade at St. Jane de Chantal.



What was your initial reaction when you learned that you would be teaching virtually?

Initially, in the two-week quarantine, there was no school. In those two weeks, we got a nice break as teachers. And in the month of March, breaks are nice.

Describe the preparations you underwent to prepare for virtual teaching?

One of the positive outcomes that teachers learned from schooling remotely was the need to embrace technology. Many teachers were able to adapt and learn new ways to reach learning goals. Google Classroom became a quick staple and zooming became second nature.

Describe what it was like teaching virtually.

Teaching remotely for me is always strange. You feel like you are talking to yourself with a screen full of confused and disinterested faces. So humor is important for engagement. I pulled up funny dog videos and weird photos. Visuals are essential. Students struggle when sitting two feet in front of a screen. I created a

scavenger hunt for the kids to find things around their house to break up the day. Little ones had the hardest time and their parents were often forced to be there with their child.

Give the reader an idea of how virtual learning affected your students. How did it affect their grades?

There was an initial learning curve for learning virtually though navigating technology was not a primary issue. As weeks passed, there were some definite times when children were detached from the desire to learn. They missed contact and friends. At the time I am sure it was difficult, but when the experience was over, there was a renewed freshness about the return to normal school routines.

Then you transitioned to teaching virtually and in-person at the same time. Describe what that was like.

At de Chantal, we had to divide the class in half and students learned remotely for two days and in-person for two days. The CDC originally called for six-foot distances in classrooms and our room

dimensions did not have enough space to meet those requirements. Also, Wednesdays were shortened, work was assigned, and teachers had meetings. It was far from ideal. But some families elected to keep their children home and go full-remote. Single parents or parents who were teachers were allowed to send their children to school every day. And this is the ideal learning environment.



What were parents' reactions to facemasks and social distancing?

Most parents understood the importance of distancing and the need for face coverings, but as time went by parent opinion became more polarized. We still have parents and children and teachers who feel comfortable with wearing masks inside. And that is perfectly fine.

Any anecdotes you want to share from that time?

In 1951, Isaac Asimov wrote a short story titled "The Fun they Had." It takes place in a future where children learn from a computer teacher in a room of their house. One sibling found a book about school in their attic describing how school was in the olden days. It described how neighborhood children came to learn from a man and how he would teach them and give them tests. They had fun. And so it was a year (or two) for our students to live both sides of the story of school, remote or in-person. We visited this story throughout the year.

Has adapting to covid conditions changed you as a teacher, and if so, how?

I gained a lot of technological independence by being forced to adapt. The idea of a paperless classroom is not far away for me. I have a greater appreciation for the little things, like maskless teaching, a room full of energetic kids,

Are there any "lessons learned" you'll carry forward with you if God forbid there is another pandemic?

Having taught in-person for 10 years, remotely for one year, and hybrid for another, I have learned the value of being present with students. The children are easier to read, which means teachers can measure academic difficulties or social worries more easily. School buildings are built as a structure to learn material, but more importantly, they are built to bring people together and learn from one another, old and young. School buildings are for building friendships. Learning through screens can never replace a group of students and their teacher.

And then there's the fun we have: bake sales, being dropped off in the cold morning, the sound of heaters clanking, the principal on the loudspeaker, the bell schedule, swapping snacks with buddies, staying to the right in the halls, kick ball, walking to church for mass, uneven desk legs, chess matches that last all day, weak water fountains, ties too tight, heavy backpacks, passing notes, the Pledge of Allegiance, Hail Mary's, all of that.

Teaching Life's Lessons ... and Having a Ball Doing It

By Jim Tise

As time ran down, Brian Dowd told the boys on his St. Elizabeth's basketball team to run out the clock. St. Jane de Chantal's eighth grade team had kept the score close in the first half, but Saint Elizabeth's stifling defense and three-point shooting ruled the day. At the sound of the buzzer St. Elizabeth won the CYO Championship for the Washington Archdiocese's Silver Division.

Competition between these two teams goes back decades. Competition between Brian Dowd and Matt Chalfant, St. Jane's coach, and both members of the Rock Creek Council, goes back a little more than a decade, but it's hard to imagine a more collegial rivalry.

"You develop relationships with the other coaches in your league," said Brian. "We're always trading notes on other teams. Matt's become a good friend. He's been great for the de Chantal community."

"We have a great rivalry, a friendly rivalry," said Chalfant. "We're happy with each other's successes and we share each other's pain. It's a competitive but fun arrangement."

Brian and Matt's commitment to coaching CYO basketball is a fine example of the sort of community outreach that defines the Knights of Columbus. Both played CYO basketball as kids, but got pulled into coaching via different routes.



Brian Dowd (left) with the champion St. Elizabeth's team. At right is assistant coach Rory Coakley. "Rory has been a great help to me, a calming influence during games and a great teacher during practice," said Brian.

What started out as a whim for Brian has morphed into an annual endeavor that he embraces wholeheartedly. It was 2011 and Brian was on break from school. His father, Kevin, and brother, Patrick, were coaching 8th grade boys at St. E's. "I started going to their games during college. I'd help out," he explained.

When the school needed a coach for its 5th and 6th graders, Brian stepped in. He has since moved up to lead the 7th and 8th grade team. He's had his share of winning and losing seasons (this year his team finished 12-2), but the goals always remain the same: learning how to win and lose with class; representing the school well; and staying focused.

That's why Brian enjoys close games: they provide better opportunities to learn. "Losing by a lot and winning by a lot are difficult," he explained. "A 6-to-8 point game builds character and mental toughness in the kids. It's more fun. The hardest part is learning to balance all that stuff," he said. "I think we do a good job towing that line."

Matt started coaching basketball clinics at de Chantal when his oldest son was a first-grader. "I just became involved in the program," recalled Matt. "From there I've had three boys go through de Chantal." He continued to coach his sons' teams as they moved up through the age groups.

Matt recalled his days playing CYO basketball. "I had a coach that put a lot of time and energy into us. I'm still close with him today." That's why he likes to coach at the higher levels of CYO. "I like the

relationships that I can build with the kids.” Basketball is unique compared to other sports, he said, because there are fewer kids on a team, with more opportunity to create those bonds.

Brian and Matt’s roles as coaches take on increased complexity and importance as their players reach a transitional point in their lives: adolescence.

“Their interests are changing,” said Matt. “Sixth graders, they just care about basketball and sports and their friends. Eighth graders are starting to care about how they look and dress and girls and popularity.” The key, he said, is “maintaining a team environment where everybody is cohesive, even though there may be different groups within the team. Some have matured, some have not. It can be challenging. There are a lot of different personalities by 8th grade.”

Successfully navigating these issues brings another level of satisfaction to the coaches.

“It’s good to see kids getting better as human beings and as players,” said Brian. “You want them to be good people.” In return, he added, “You want to be good role models. These parents trust us with their kids.”



Matt Chalfant (left) with his St. Jane deChantal team. At right is Assistant Coach Katie Shaffer. “She’s been coaching with me for five seasons and her support, knowledge, organization, and attention to detail make my job so much easier,” said Matt.

Teaching their players how to handle tough losses or bad seasons is just part of the learning experience.

Brian noted how the pandemic upended his team’s seasons. The 2021 season was cancelled and this year’s competition was severely curtailed. St. E’s and St. Jane’s normally play close to 30 games a season. This year several tournaments were cancelled and the teams played roughly a dozen games.

“A lot of these kids aren’t playing high school basketball,” noted Brian. “These games are their memories.”

Recalling his days as a self-described “not very good player” who worked hard to earn playing time, Matt wants to make sure his kids get some fulfillment from playing. “I try to make sure every kid has a special moment every season,” he said.

Brian related one such memory with one of his young players. St. E's had lost a close game to Holy Redeemer and one of his guards was devastated. Two weeks later St. E's got its revenge and defeated Holy Redeemer. "I looked over at him. He had the biggest smile on his face. Two weeks ago he was crying. And now he's happy as a clam. That's what makes it all worthwhile."

For Matt, the lasting relationships is what makes it all worthwhile. He still runs into old players. "They're 20 years old now and when they see me they still call me 'coach.' It's a great feeling. It's an incredible privilege to coach. A lot of people look at it as a volunteer time commitment. I look at it the other way. The parish is doing me a favor by allowing me to do it."

Despite the complexities of dealing with young men transitioning in life, as well as with the usual ups and downs of sports, Brian is looking forward to coaching next season. "I'm guessing it's a little like parenting. It can be hard, but incredibly rewarding. I couldn't imagine my life without it."

"For Brian to [coach] without having kids of his own I think is phenomenal," said Matt. "I think it's nice for the kids in that age group that have a coach who is not a parent or a friend of their dad's." Matt said he would like to foster a transition with St. Jane's CYO program that brings in younger, former students to coach before they have family obligations.

As for Matt, his wife has been encouraging him to take some time off after this season. "I guess for a while I thought Saturday might be my last game," said Matt. He paused a moment before adding, "I know it will not be my last game."

Council Hosts Pro-Life Luncheon for Priests

by Lawrence P. Grayson, PGK

On March 14, the council hosted a luncheon for priests at which Zachary King, former High Wizard of the Church of Satan, spoke about his movement from Christianity to Satanism and then his eventual conversion to Catholicism. The event, organized by Defend Life, was attended by 40 priests, deacons and seminarians, as well as over 40 additional lay people. Bishop Joseph Coffey of the Archdiocese of Military Services offered the opening prayer.



Zachary King

King discussed his introduction to the occult through learning at the age of ten from a classmate a magic spell, in which he was able to conjure up a demonic spirit. He was so enamored by this ability that he repeated the "game" at home 25 to 50 times a day. Several times, he asked the demon for money and each time was rewarded. He soon discovered like-minded individuals and joined a satanic coven. At 13, he signed a document in his own blood, selling his soul to the devil. By the end of his high school years, he was abusing alcohol and drugs, was sexually active and addicted to porn, and had committed several abortions.

King issued strong advice to parents: Speak with your children about these temptations and about proper behavior. Know what your children are doing on the internet. If you do not shape their values, they will get information – bad information -- from others.

As he began college, he joined the World Church of Satan, and through diligent application quickly rose through its various levels. At 21, he became a High Wizard, the youngest person ever chosen for this top position. Among the 7 million church members, there are less than 10 high wizards at any given time. These are the only members allowed to cast demonic spells.

In his tenure, King participated in 149 abortions, only 3 of which failed. When he studied the reports of failures of other high wizards, he found one common thread: there was always a group of people nearby chanting prayers on beads.

After a decade in this role, King decided to leave the organization. Knowing that people do not voluntarily leave and live, he took a great deal of cash, destroyed his credit cards and other means to trace him, then fled for Canada. The border guards, however, did not allow him to enter. He settled in Oklahoma for three years, working at a variety of jobs. Then, he tried to enter Canada twice again, but was rejected each time. Now, he settled in Vermont and worked selling jewelry at a mall kiosk.

One day, a woman stopped by and bought a pair of earrings. As she took them, she said she had a gift for him and placed a Miraculous Medal in his hand. She said the Blessed Mother is “calling you for her army.” She then told him several of his sins and said they were “of the devil.” The woman invited him to the Catholic Church she attended.

King went the next day and his life was transformed. He had long discussions with a priest, soon had a spiritual director, received an exorcism, was introduced to Perpetual Adoration which he attended from 30 minutes to 18 hours a day, and soon was brought fully into the Catholic Church. At Adoration, the Blessed Mother said he should work to stop abortion by telling his story.

King’s formula for eliminating abortion clinics is to use the most powerful spiritual weapon – the Mass -- against them. He suggests outfitting vans with portable altars, having priests offer Mass near the clinics, have Eucharistic Processions, pray the Rosary, and seek the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the title the Blessed Mother used when she appeared in 1531, pregnant with Our Lord.

This approach is being used in Maryland. To date, 13 priests have utilized 3 vans to offer 33 Masses near abortion clinics. More are planned.



Zachary King holds the attention of priests and other attendees at the Council’s Pro-Life luncheon.

Fraternal Benefits: “#1 Most compelling reason to do business with the Knights of Columbus”

There are many reasons to consider doing business with the Knights of Columbus. Tops on this list would have to include having a Brother Knight you can trust giving you personal advice. One could also include the actual products that are designed – built inside the advantages of the chassis of a non-profit tax status. Many would proffer that the Knights of Columbus being ranked as the most financially sound insurance company in North America (KofC in a 6-way tie for 1st place) by Standard and Poor's would be a top contender. All these reasons are valid. To some, one of them may be their personal #1 consideration, which is wonderful. But underlying all these reasons to do business with the Knights of Columbus is the overarching fact that **when you do business with the Order you are making a conscious choice with your premium dollars to support an organization that aligns with your faith and your values.**

This reason is many times just taken for granted. But it shouldn't be. If you look at our society and the businesses offering products and services to us – where can you make such a difference with your spendable and investment dollars? If any company did what we do with our profits those CEOs and Board of Directors would be ridiculed and ousted immediately.

Imagine a Fortune 1000 publicly traded company buying Ultrasound machines for pregnancy centers encouraging women to not abort their babies? What would the reaction be if a company decided to support a particular religious faith and gave money and designed programs to that faith community? Deeper yet, what if that company supported that faith's values that were in direct contrast to the mainstream consumer audience it was selling its products to?



Steve Upton

So, there you have it. The #1 reason why any Brother Knight should consider doing business with the Knights of Columbus. As Knights, many of us understand this and are putting our business with the Order for those financial needs that we feel we want to address.

How can we ever thank you for your support? I guess the thanks really comes in the form of knowing that your dollars are directly and indirectly helping others in a capacity that would be impossible by doing business with any other financial institution.

My friends, know that our insurance program was a carefully designed financial support system for our Order's members AND the charities and causes that we share as fellow Catholics. **It's impossible to have a successful Knights of Columbus on the charitable side of the house without our financial services arm.** Fr. McGivney choose to start his own insurance protection entity instead of just telling our early members to “make sure you protect your families.” In his wisdom we have all built the Knights of Columbus you are a part of today. He was ahead of his time in many areas – including the decision to start his own insurance company to both help our members and the broader Catholic communities and society at large.

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Fourth Degree, Knights of Columbus Cardinal Patrick A. O'Boyle Assembly 386

Congratulations to Brother Matt Flynn who recently became a 4th Degree Knight with Cardinal Patrick A. O'Boyle Assembly 386 during an exemplification in February. He was joined by five other Brothers. "New members bring new ideas and new energy and I am looking forward to their participation," said Dan Ward, Faithful Navigator for the Assembly.

The next opportunity to join the Assembly is on June 4 at the John Paul II Center. "This will be a big event and will include activities for the wives," said Dan. Brothers who are interested in the 4th Degree exemplification may contact Dan at wardd0050@gmail.com.

Chess Tournament Benefits Veterans



The second Rock Creek Council chess tournament this year proved another big success, raising \$850 for the Children's Inn at NIH and nearly \$600 in food donations for USASOA, which helps our homeless and elderly at-risk veterans who are food insecure and are most vulnerable to the covid-19 virus. DGK Alex Lieb put this food drive together. Thanks to PGK Mike Houlihan, who organized and ran the tournament, along with worthy brothers Bob Melzer and John Andrews. As always, Mike Horan and Mike Naas set up, cleaned up and provided food and drink for the participants and their families.

The Seniors Club had no report for this edition. Reports from the Lounge and KC Club were not available at press time.

The next issue of The Chatter will be posted in July. If you have a story idea, email Jim Tise at jim.tise@faa.gov, or text him at 202-507-1287.



Ed Slott, America's IRA Expert, presents **Retirement Planning in a Changing Landscape**

Ed Slott, CPA

is a nationally recognized speaker, television personality & best-selling author known for his unparalleled ability to turn advanced tax strategies into understandable, actionable and entertaining advice. Ed combines current research, in-depth expertise, and humor to teach viewers about the ins and outs of their retirements and provides insight to the latest tax and planning information.



You are invited to join our free virtual webinar featuring Ed Slott. Ed specializes in the latest retirement planning strategies and opportunities for 2022. Register today to reserve your spot.

June 3: 7:30 PM EDT:
<https://tinyurl.com/SlottJune3>



June 15: 7:30 PM EDT:
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