

## Grand Knight's Message

Worthy Brothers:

When I became Grand Knight nearly two years ago, I established five high-level goals for our great Council. These goals were to (1. grow membership; 2. expand charitable initiatives; 3. resume programs post-COVID; 4. enhance Council communications; and 5. maintain/improve the Council facility.

I am happy to report that these goals have been met. Highlights include:



### **Membership Growth:**

We exceeded our new member quota each of the past two years. As a result, we earned the Star Council award in 2021-2022, and are poised to win Star Council again in 2022-2023. Concurrently, in coordination with the State and Supreme, we transferred out 200-plus delinquent/non dues-paying members, resulting in substantial annual cost savings.

**Charitable Initiatives:** We made charitable donations exceeding \$15,000 between July 2021 and March 2023. (See below for a breakout of our most recent giving.)

Timely payment of your annual dues makes it possible for us to give back to our Community.

**Programs:** Under the leadership of Programs Chair Mike Horan, and with support from many members, the Council has come back to life post-COVID with regular Council meetings and events, including popular social events in the Lounge.

**Enhanced Communications:** We identified a new editor for the Chatter (thank you, Jim Tise!), grew membership in the Council email ListServ, and increased the frequency and timeliness of email communications.

**Maintain/Improve Facility:** We installed new carpeting and barstool caps (thank you Brian Dowd and Scott Roth) in the Lounge and power-washed the patio and exterior staircases (thank you, Kevin Whitcomb and Phil Cabrales). Also, the KayCee Club, under Jon Lowe's leadership, has made numerous structural and cosmetic upgrades/improvements to the facility, with more planned in the near-term (see related story below).

In closing, I would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to each of you for supporting me as your Grand Knight during the past two years, and I look forward to assisting Deputy Grand Knight Alex Lieb when he becomes Grand Knight in July.

Ivan Galic  
Grand Knight

## Remembering Those Who Have Gone Before Us



The Council held a Memorial Mass on Saturday, January 21st to commemorate the lives of Council members who passed during the previous year. Mass was celebrated by Fr. Hughes from Holy Redeemer. The Knights Honor Guard, which is staffed by members of the Sullivan Brothers Assembly, was on hand and played an integral role in the event. At the conclusion of the Mass, Faithful Navigator Dan Ward, leader of the Assembly, presented the Council with a commemorative encased U.S. flag which was previously flown over Shanksville, PA, the site of the crash of Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001. The encased flag is now displayed proudly and prominently in the Lounge. The Council extends a heartfelt thank you to the Assembly for this gift. [See related story below.]

## Where Charity Prevails

As you know, charity is the first principle of the Knights of Columbus. The Rock Creek Council has made multiple, meaningful charitable donations to various organizations, families and individuals during the fraternal year. In the interest of transparency, GK Ivan Galic provided an accounting of our charitable donations, totaling \$8,865 (through March 2023).

1. \$2,000 to the Children's Inn at NIH (proceeds from two youth chess tournaments)
2. \$1,750 for six Teacher of the Year awards for our six parish schools
3. \$1,500 to sponsor a dinner for 200+ students at the University of Maryland Catholic student center
4. \$865 to the Arc of Montgomery County (proceeds from Tootsie roll sales)
5. \$500 to sponsor a Seminarian at St. John Paul II seminary
6. \$300 to the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts
7. \$300 to support a homeless family in desperate need of food and shelter
8. \$250 for the Campus Ministry program at Archbishop Carroll high school
9. \$200 to Holy Redeemer parish for their support of the Council's Memorial Mass
10. \$200 to support the Ultrasound program
11. \$170 to support the Knights of Columbus State of Maryland annual convention
12. \$150 to the Christian Refugee Relief fund

13. \$150 to the family trust of deceased member Tim Trybus
14. \$150 to support member Patrick Durkin's fundraiser
15. \$150 for the Box of Joy program
16. \$130 for the Toys for Tots program
17. \$100 to USASOA

GK Galic notes that this list doesn't include "in-kind" donations (such as food, beverage and associated supplies associated with Council-hosted events such as the Memorial Mass, Teachers Appreciation dinner, etc. These "in-kind" donations are valued at several thousand dollars.

## Honoring our Council's Teachers: It's Not Just a Job, It's a Vocation

Although guised in the trappings of an awards ceremony, the Knights of Columbus' annual Teacher of the Year Awards event was really more of a family reunion, albeit across many families and six parishes. Roughly 80 teachers, principals and family members attended the February 17 dinner, held physically at the Council for the first time since 2019.

Six teachers were commended for their work with our Catholic children, and one of them won the overall award of Teacher of the Year. In fact, all of the council's "crew of teachers, packed with so many talents," were being honored.

The Council's Mike Horan and John Teare organized the free food and drink service. Brothers Matt Morin and John Schneider volunteered their time to bartend, as did Brothers Alex Lieb, Mike Naas and Chris Horan, who helped with set-up and breakdown of the event.



*(From left) Kevin Ricca, Tim Strachan and Ken Meringolo from First Amendment Sports emceed the event.*

The ceremony was emceed by the three members of First Amendment Sports, a sports streaming service. Brothers Kevin Ricca, Tim Strachan and Ken Meringolo provided an fast-paced rapport as they spoke sincerely — and often, hilariously — of their affection for the Catholic schools they attended and educations they received. Kevin noted he is the son of two Catholic school teachers; Ken referred to himself and his colleagues as "Catholic school guys forever"; and Tim spoke movingly of how Catholic school "saved me" as a youngster who was struggling in public school.

The three gave moving introductions to each of the winners. They included:

**Julia Bueno**, who has been teaching pre-school, kindergarten through third grade at Holy Cross since 2018. Julia was drawn to teaching because of children's "joy, curiosity, and enthusiasm are infectious. It is

wonderful to be recognized by like-minded, faith-driven professionals."

**Wendy Spellman**, who won the overall Teacher of the Year Award, has been teaching for 20 years. She currently is teaching pre-school at Holy Redeemer. "I became a teacher because I just really love watching children learn and grow. I want to make their first school experience the best it can be, having fun while learning." It's an honor, she said, "be recognized for something I really love doing."

The latest stop in **Kathy Miller's** 37-year career with the Archdiocese is at St. Jane de Chantal, where she has been teaching special-needs children in grades 3-8 since 2017. "Teaching is an incredible vocation where you can make a difference in a child's life every day" said Kathy. "Every faculty member in our school works hard, so it is very heartwarming to be recognized by my peers and someone who goes the extra mile."

This is **Meredith Mirkow's** fourth year (out of 29 years total as an educator) at Little Flower, where she teaches 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Religion. She grew up surrounded in her neighborhood and community by educators. "I thought I wanted to teach high school," she explained, "but a middle school principal made an appeal to ... to consider middle school. ... so I student-taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade and fell in love with middle school."

**Cathy Kashatus** comes from a family of teachers (father and both sisters). She currently instructs first graders at St. Bartholomew's. "I am so grateful that I get to spend my days with curious little people who remind me of the importance of embracing a sense of wonder. Teaching in a Catholic school has enhanced this experience." Cathy used the award money to add to her classroom library.

**Deirdre Walsh** began working at Our Lady of Lourdes when her children started attending school there. She is now in her 7<sup>th</sup> year as the PreK teacher. "Receiving this award is a great honor as I feel I work with, and learn from, the most incredible teachers and staff. They are great at what they do and are compassionate and joyful. I am blessed to be a part of the OLOL community and feel so grateful for the award," she added.



*Grand Knight Galic is flanked by this year's winners. They include (from left) Deirdre Walsh, Meredith Mirkow, Julie Bueno, Wendy Spellman, Kathy Miller and Cathy Kashatus.*

## **Join the Council's ListServ**

Joining the Council's email ListServ is the best way for members and associates to stay informed about Council-related news, information and events. In fact, membership in the ListServ has increased by nearly 20% (to approximately 500 email accounts) in the past two years alone! To get added to the listserv, please fill out the on-line form located on the Council website: <https://www.kofc2797.org/contact>.

Also, you can keep up to date on all of the Council's current officers by accessing [Officers — Rock Creek Council #2797 \(kofc2797.org\)](#). At that site you can email the GK and DGK.



## Cardinal O'Boyle Assembly

The Cardinal O'Boyle Assembly recently presented a United States flag that had flown over the Shanksville, PA 9/11 Memorial to the Rock Creek Council.

"In appreciation to Rock Creek Council's generosity, and to Mike Horan, Grand Knight Ivan Galic and Julie Carter, who have worked tirelessly to make us feel at home, we decided that we would go to Shanksville, PA and bring back a flag to present to the Council in gratitude for their efforts," explained Dan Ward, Faithful Navigator of the assembly.

The assembly is grateful to the Council for letting it use its space rent-free. It had been meeting at Rosensteel Council for some time, but the council decided to double the rent the assembly pays for a meeting room.

Desperate to find a space they could afford (the assembly's dues are only \$35 annually), Dan took a long shot and contacted Rock Creek. Our council agreed to host the assembly at no cost. "The men were absolutely elated to have a roof over their head," said Ward. "The reception that we've had from Rock Creek has been overwhelming, very positive and delightful."

As important, the free space allows the assembly to use its dues to subsidize by 50% the uniforms of the assembly's color guard, sponsor two seminarians, and support veterans at Walter Reed Hospital.

The idea to go to Shanksville came during a conversation last September 11 between Dan and Assembly Captain Kevin Jeffords (a recent transfer into the Rock Creek Council). [Click here to read details about their visit to the site.](#)

The presentation ceremony was especially moving for Grand Knight Ivan Galic, who lost his cousin, Erwin Erker, in the World Trade Center tower that day. "I am extremely honored that the Cardinal O'Boyle Assembly presented this American Flag to the Rock Creek Council," said Ivan. "Erwin left behind a wife and two young children. Their lives, and the lives of millions of Americans, changed forever that day. We will display the flag proudly in our lounge to Never Forget what happened that fateful day."



*This case contains a flag that flew over the 9/11 Memorial in Shanksville, PA.*



The Cardinal O'Boyle Assembly also does outreach to our community. For instance, it recently provided an honor guard at the funeral for Tom Claxton, a retired deputy chief at the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department. This was the first such joint ceremony for both organizations. To bring

the story full circle, the fire department meets for free at the Rock Creek Council, as well. "Imagine how

we felt that we shared a generous gesture from one Council,” said Dan Ward. “I was so very proud to share our experience.”

The assembly comprises 275 4<sup>th</sup>-Degree members, including such Rock Creek Council stalwarts as Larry Grayson, Neil Dorian, Joe Murphy, Jude Franklin and Mike Naas, as well as dozens of others. There is an exemplification being held on June 17<sup>th</sup> for any 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Knight who would like to join the assembly.

## Welcome to the Seven New Members of the Rock Creek Council



The Rock Creek Council recently exemplified seven new members, including perhaps our first family grouping that included a father and two sons. GK Ivan Galic (fourth from right) welcomed the new members, including (from left) Lawrence Tennant, Edward Tennant III, Edward Tennant Jr., Joe Johnson, GK Galic, Robert Lauta, Mark Hernandez and Chuck Hoag.

The exemplification continues the Council’s strong recruiting efforts, recently acknowledged by two prestigious awards from the Knights of Columbus.

The first award — Star Council — recognizes Rock Creek’s community service contributions, membership growth, and fraternal benefits support. Notably, Rock Creek achieved the highest rate of net membership growth in the State of Maryland during the 2021-2022 fraternal year and exceeded its membership growth target by 35%!

The second award — Membership Growth — was awarded to Rock Creek by the Knights of Columbus Supreme headquarters in Connecticut. This award also recognizes the Council’s net membership growth during the 2021-2022 fraternal year.

## O’Hara Catholic High School Scholarship Opens for Applications



The Rock Creek Council is accepting applications to its Charles O’Hara high school scholarship program. It is open to members’ children entering a Catholic high school in the Washington Archdiocese. The member must be in good standing with the Council.

Check out the website at <https://www.kofc2797.org/ohara-scholarship> for more information.

## USASOA Recognizes Rock Creek Council's Generosity

The United Soldiers and Sailors of America (USASOA) presented its John F. Kennedy Servant Leadership Award to the Knights of Columbus for our ongoing support of the organization.

According to John P. Yori III, USASOA president and co-founder, the award is given out "on rare occasions to individuals or groups who support our organization's mission in exemplary ways."

The award recognizes the Council's patriotism and philanthropic contributions to ensuring that all service members and veterans are treated as our greatest national treasures. The plaque will be proudly displayed in the Lounge.

Deputy Grand Knight Alex Lieb accepted the award on behalf of the Council. Since 2019, the Rock Creek Council has donated tens of thousands of dollars in groceries and cash donations to USASOA.

"Congrats to the Council" said Alex. "I'm happy to drive the Council's on-going efforts to support USASOA. Way to go team!"

"A heartfelt thanks to DGK Lieb and his team of volunteers (Pat Corkery, Mark McAndrews, Amanda Roche and others) who lead and conduct food drives and other related efforts each year to support USASOA," said GK Galic.

USASOA provides multiple services to our military veterans beyond food donations. It lobbies Capitol Hill on behalf of veterans' issues, such as military hunger and "burn-pit" legislation, as well as peer-to-peer counseling and suicide prevention.

## KC Club Report

As of 3/31/23, the Council has booked more than \$115,000 in events for the hall for the January 1-December 31, 2023 timeframe. The Council also received a \$1,500 gift card from American Plant for hosting the company's March dinner.

In addition to marketing and lead generation for weddings and mitzvahs, Julie Carter is focusing on funerals/celebration of life leads. Per Julie, the Council hosted 23 funerals/celebrations of life totaling \$42,700. The weekday events are especially beneficial because they usually don't conflict with other events and the bar generates an average of \$700 per event.

A new Rock Creek Council brochure is being dropped off to eight parishes, as well as local funeral homes. Copies of the new brochure will be kept at the Mansion's side entrance on the table in the vestibule.

In other news, the flat roof of our Council has been replaced. Future projects might include repairing the stone wall along the entrance to the lounge, doing additional planting, and perhaps replacing patio furniture.



*[Right] Alex Lieb receives the Servant Award from Steve Agnelli, USASOA chairman of the board.*





## Jim Effner presents Importance of Whole Life as Part of a Retirement Plan

**Jim Effner** is founder and President of P2P Group and specializes in training financial services professionals. Previously Jim was Managing Partner of one of the largest Northwestern Mutual offices in the country. He built the Effner Group to nearly 150 full-time and college advisors, insuring over 65,000 policyholders.



**You are invited to join our webinar featuring Jim Effner, who specializes in financial services and has been helping thousands of families with financial planning.**

April 26, 2023

Date

7:30 PM EST

Time

<https://tinyurl.com/KofCEffnerApril26>

RSVP



Scan here

No purchase is necessary. This event is for informational purposes only and does not constitute financial, tax or legal advice. Knights of Columbus, One Columbus Plaza, New Haven, CT 06510

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