

Grand Knight's Message

Worthy Brothers:

During my senior year of high school, after a particularly crushing loss to our main rival, my basketball coach entered the locker room to address the team. Instead of berating us for our poor play, which we anticipated — and deserved — he began his post-game speech with the words, "There is no I in team." He then turned around, exited the room, and left us alone to figure to why we lost the game.

Over the years, I've used this cliché on more than one occasion, mostly in the context of coaching my kids' youth sports teams, but even sometimes in my professional life. I'm struck not only by the simplicity of the words, but the poignancy of their meaning.



Recently, our great Council was faced with a significant challenge when Worthy Past Grand Knight and Programs Director Mike Horan underwent emergency surgery, which has caused him to largely step away from his Council responsibilities. As we all know, Mike does an awful lot for our Council, ranging from mundane, day-to-day building upkeep tasks to planning fun-filled Council events.

As Grand Knight, I'm happy to report that we have a great TEAM running our Council. During Mike's on-going recovery, several members have stepped up and taken on added duties to assure that our Council and KayCee Club continue to function effectively. I'd like to thank these members for

their great work during this difficult period. And, of course, we all wish Mike a full and speedy recovery!

Looking ahead, I encourage each of you to get involved in the Council Team. If you're new to Rock Creek, come to a meeting and learn more about who we are and the good work we do. For instance, read the story below about how we catered dinner for the Catholic Student Center at the University of Maryland. If you've been inactive for a while, we welcome you back. There are many ways to get involved and help our Council grow. Feel free to contact me or any Council officer with questions or to offer your assistance.

And for the record, the Hunter Hawks (my team) went on to defeat the Stuyvesant Peglegs (our rival) to close out the 1989-1990 basketball season, thereby avenging our earlier loss. Coach's message got through to us.

Vivat Jesus!

KC Club Report

Rentals are strong, keeping pace with last year, with nearly \$200,000 in events already booked. Plus, the Club sold its lease on the power station land to Verizon, resulting in a lump-sum payment that leaves the Council “very secure financially,” said KC Club member Brian Dowd. The Club is still looking for a business to rent our parking lot during the day. NIH was interested but federal rules prohibits them from renting a lot as large as ours.

The Club has been busy upgrading and maintaining the Council's building and grounds. The mansion's exterior has been painted (the work was done by City & Suburban Decorator, owned by Brother Danny Rogers) and a new roof installed on the main building. Note the new landscaping near the side entrance adjacent to the driveway. The back steps leading to the patio were repaired.

Coming in the new year: the Club is soliciting bids to replace the flat roof over Cantrell Hall; sealing and re-stripping the parking lot; and widening and paving the driveway out front. The roofing is scheduled for completion in the next month or two. The driveway and parking lot work is expected to take about two days each and is anticipated for the Spring.



Many thanks to the crew that helped decorate the mansion for Christmas. They worked several hours to get the building looking so festive. The volunteers included (from left) Augie Moore, Mike Naas, Kristie Galic, Monica Westrick and Matt Dugan. Not pictured but also helping was Lee Nelson.

And the Council Keeps on Giving ...



The Rock Creek Council outdid itself again in its ongoing food drive to benefit United Soldiers and Sailors of America. The latest drive, done in conjunction with Our Lady of Lourdes Church, gathered more than \$6,000 in donations to help our veterans. John Yori, president of USASOA, said it was one of the biggest donations on record. John Schneider and Mark Roualet helped pack Patrick Corkery's 9-foot cargo van. Paul Vergara made his vehicle available if it was needed. "Many thanks to all of you for the hope this gives," said Alex Lieb, who leads the effort. Well done, Council!

Speaking of Giving ...



On Wednesday, December 7th, Brother Knights Chris Rhodes, PGK Chris Ryan and Mike Morin hosted a Toys for Tots collection drive. Thanks to the generosity of the members of our #2797 — including a sizeable donation of various toys made by the Council itself (your annual dues at work!) — the Brother Knights collected two large boxes of toys which will be donated to needy children and families in the greater D.C. area just in time for Christmas. "Thank you to the Knights of Columbus community for such a generous and amazing show of support for a great cause," said Mike. Pictured are (from left) Brothers Rhodes, Morin, GK Ivan Galic, and PGK Ryan.

Flock of Vultures

An estimated 200 college students enjoyed a dinner catered by the Rock Creek Council on November 2nd at the University of Maryland's Catholic Student Center. Following Mass, the Terps feasted on pulled pork and chicken, corn bread, Caesar salad, cole slaw, rolls and assorted desserts from Mission BBQ.

This is the first time that the Rock Creek Council has participated in the weekly dinners, which have been a mainstay at the university since the early 2000s. It came at a time that the Council was looking for new opportunities for new Knights to get involved. As it happened, Ann Gradowski (grew up in Little Flower Parish; she and husband, John, raised five kids at St. Jane deChantal), who has served at the student center for 15 years as director of development, reached out to PGK Jamie Caulfield via OLOL pastor Fr. Rob Walsh, who passed on the invitation to GK Ivan Galic.

"[The dinner] provides a bit of insight to the student of what a good steward of parish life does," explained Ann. "And in return our students also help serve, prep, clean up and interact so the donor volunteers can see the faith alive in the young people, as well," she added.

The dinner is a huge draw for the center, and vital to its ministry to Catholic students at Maryland, said Matt Aujero, campus minister. "The campus can be isolating. With a 40,000 population, you can get lost in there. Here, you come to a warm place where people want to know your name, say hi to you, and generally are interested in you," he added.

As an example, Matt noted that Nickolas Watson, a third-degree Knight and son of District Deputy Mike Watson (St. Raphael's), came to help serve food. "We were able to connect his son with another student who takes the same class as him. It's kind of a cool way to meet people, and the student gets a little more involved. That's a critical thing to see."



The meal was served by KoC members PGK Mike Horan, Inside Guard Mike Naas, DGK Alex Lieb, District Deputy Mike Watson, GK Ivan Galic, and student volunteers.

Nikolas, a junior majoring in cell biology, agrees. Being a commuter and working virtually his entire freshman year, he said the dinners are a great way to "meet other like-minded people in college, where it might be hard to find other Catholics in your classes."

"My takeaway," he added, "was that it was really nice to meet all these people and it was fun serving. I think I would like to hang out more there. I'm going to try to go to more of the dinners."

It's not unusual to see parents of students participate in the meals. "The fun thing about these dinners is it's very inter-generational," said

Matt. It's common for older adults, college students, staff members and children of staff to attend, as well as sisters and religious brothers, seminarians and alumni deacons.

Leftovers are stored in the center's refrigerator and made available for free after noon Mass on Thursday. The Mission BBQ drew a ravenous crowd. "It was like a flock of vultures in the kitchen," chuckled Matt. "It was the best Thursday lunch that the student center has had."

The center has been successful in helping the church fill its vocational need. Twenty men have entered the seminary in the past nine years. "Part of the reason we get so many vocations is the Holy Spirit and the Eucharistic Adoration," said Matt.

With success comes challenges, however. The center needs a bigger space and had begun a campaign to raise \$3.5 million in the next five years. Just under \$2 million has been raised so far. "One of the things we're hoping to do is build a perpetual adoration chapel" said Matt. "That's one of the reasons Christ lives here, because he literally is here."

"We're super grateful for groups like yours," he added. "We couldn't pull off these, what we call wide funnel events, without you."

"We have calculated if we had to have these dinners catered or paid for (even if we cook ourselves, which we have had to do) the costs per year would be \$60,000," said Ann. We are immensely blessed to have groups like Rock Creek partner with us, as those dinners are a truly instrumental way for our ministry to reach our students to help them see community, faith, friends and of course food in action. UMD is a pretty big school - and we hope we can be a home away from home for these kids — so Christ can be the center in their lives.



Mike and Nikolas Watson

Those interested in donating to the campaign can do so at <https://catholicterps.org/the-new-catholic-student-center/> and/or <https://membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/choosegifts/MD145/32418>. Or mail the donation to the Catholic Student Center @ UMD, 4141 Guilford Dr., College Park, MD 20740.

Chess Tournament Challenges Minds, Raises Money

The Council's youth chess tournaments continue to produce winners, and not just among the The latest event, held October 31, resulted in a check(mate) of \$915 for donation to the Children's Inn at NIH.



Congrats to PGK Mike Houlihan for organizing the tournament, and thanks to all of the volunteers, including Athena Geco, Barnard Harman, Chris Sieber, GK Ivan Galic, PGK Mike Horan, Bob Metzler, DGK Alex Lieb, PGK Rich Heim, the Naas's (Mike, Martha and Shannon), PGK Neil Dorian and others for helping to make the tournament a success.

In addition to the Children's Inn, the winners were: K-2 Division — 1st: Liam Perraut, St. Bartholomew; 2nd: Kellan Byrne, Mater Dei; 3rd: Tripp Joyce, Mater Dei; 3-5 Division — 1st: Luca Pinto, Woods Academy; Amir Nashashibi,

Carderock ES; 3rd: Tony Gazzolo, Carderock ES; 6-8 Division — 1st: Tommy Byrne, Woods Academy; 2nd: Cyrus Charowhaus, Silver Creek MS; 3rd: Landon Eum, Mater Dei; Overall Winner: Lochan Barry, Blessed Sacrament. Team winners were: 1st: Mater Dei; 2nd: Woods Academy; 3rd: North Chevy Chase. Sportsmanship Award: Hugo Cota, 2nd Grade, Holy Redeemer.

Rock Creek Council Seeks, Welcomes New Brothers



Gus Alzona



William Dumayas

On Sunday, October 16th, Worthy Brother Gus Alzona led a recruitment drive at St. Jane's. The goal of the drive was to inform the community about the Knights of Columbus and the Rock Creek Council. We are actively seeking new members! The Council has exemplified eight new members halfway through the Columbian Year. Our goal is 16 new members. Please encourage your Catholic friends/family/ neighbors to join. Visit our website at <https://www.kofc2797.org/> and click "Become a Knight."

Meantime, welcome new Brother William Dumayas. He and his wife, Diana (married 25 years), and sons Julian and Austin are members of Little Flower Parish. William grew up in Adelphi, where

he attended mass at St. Camillus Church. He has a degree in fire protection engineering from the University of Maryland.

Mark Your Calendars

On February 17th, the Council will host the 33rd annual Teachers Appreciation event. Although the event was cancelled last year, the Council still granted \$1,250 to the Teacher of the Year award winners from our six Parish schools. We anticipate granting at least as much to this year's winners.

The emcees for this year's event will be First Amendment Sports including Council members Kevin Ricca and Tim Strachan, and Ken Meringolo. The Council is providing food and drink to thank the teachers and staff at each school for their great work and service to the community.

If you would like to donate to the Teachers Appreciation fund, please mail or drop off a check at the Council, and write Teachers Appreciation on the memo line.

Thank you in advance for any support you're able to provide.

District Deputy's Message

Happy New Year!!! I hope everyone had a great Christmas with their family and friends and re-energized their body and spirit by spending some time with our Lord over the Christmas season.

All of the Councils should be ready to jump back into being Knights in Action with the many activities that your local Council is participating in the next few months. Get involved and bring a fellow Knight that you have not seen lately to one of your upcoming activities. You both will be happy that you did. Unity and fraternity are two of the watchwords for the Order. Live it.



During November I was able to participate in the necrology masses at the State and District level. These were very sobering events to hear the great number of our fellow Brothers that have gone on to their just rewards with the heavenly Father. This really brought home to me the need for a greater emphasis on recruiting new members to your Councils (I must admit this was not a priority for me when I was a GK and looking back I regret it) to ensure the future viability and vitality of your Council. Just approach one new face at the next Mass that you attend and say, "Let me tell you why I am a Knight." You may be surprised at their response.

January is March for Life month. The fight for life is not over with the overturning of Roe v Wade as the fight is in the legislative branches that are seeking to codify abortion. Maryland (Land of Mary and first Catholic settlement on Clements Island) of all places is at the forefront of abortion on demand and at any time. Be sure to get your Councils and Brothers active in the many events available.

Here are some that you can participate in:

- National March for Life on the National Mall in DC - volunteer through the Supreme website, sponsor a bus for your parish, go as a Council or bring your family. I have gone many times with my kids and it is very worthwhile.
- Sisters of Life and their LifeFest, a pre-March event in DC at the Entertainment and Sports Arena. Volunteers needed on the Supreme website or attend.
- Pilgrimage Masses at the Basilica in DC provide an opportunity to help usher at the many Masses being held prior to the March for participants from around the country. Feel free to reach out to me if interested.

Again, Happy New Year and all the best for the coming year. Remember: "Cry the Gospel with Your Life."

All the best and Vivat Jesus!

Michael Watson – District Deputy #18 MD State Council

Seniors Club Report

Our Seniors' group is still alive, but not very active with the Knight's Chatter being published quarterly— and not monthly — that we used for communication. We will hold a pizza party meeting when I return from Florida. I delivered all of our supplies to the Council now that Helen Brennan has moved to a condo. Thanks, Helen.

The officers have voted to donate \$1,000 to PGK Mike Horan for his medical bills. Mike has always been a big supporter of our group.

Be safe and healthy!

Bob Waters,
Seniors Club President

RECOGNIZED AGAIN FOR WHAT WE DO BEST.



* Knights of Columbus ranked #26 in the permanent life insurance category on Forbes 2023 America's Best Insurance Company list. Forbes partnered with Statista to independently survey more than 16,000 customers who owned at least one insurance policy across 7 insurance product categories.

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