NCCS Chairman discusses Scouting on International EWTN Program

On September 6, 2006, NCCS Chairman Bray Barnes appeared on “EWTN Live with Father Mitch Pacwa.” Eternal Word Television Network, (EWTN), headquartered in Irondale, Alabama, is an independent Catholic television network that is broadcast around the world in a multitude of languages. The program, “ETWN Live with Father Mitch Pacwa,” televised to more than 135 million households around the world, was a live one hour broadcast that began with a conversation between Barnes and Fr. Mitch. The second half of the program was a question and answer session with questions being asked by members in a live audience and by viewers calling in.

Barnes spoke about the role of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and our service as youth ministers to more than 287,000 Catholic Scouts around the United States utilizing the values of the Scouting program. He also spoke about our religious emblems program and how that teaches Scouts about their Catholic faith. Many of the activities that Catholic Scouts participate in such as the BSA National Jamboree Mass and the St. George Trek were discussed. He also highlighted the Philmont adult training program “Scouting in the Catholic Church.”

The discussion also focused on the new NCCS relationship with the Knights of Columbus concerning the membership growth plan, as well as the NCCS relationship with the Military Archdiocese and their collaborative efforts to have Catholic Scouting on military bases and posts around the country. Barnes also talked about our need to be more reflective of the Catholic Church in the United States today and what NCCS is doing to fulfill that mandate.

Fr. Mitch asked about some of the challenges that face Scouting today, such as access, leadership, membership and the ability to provide youth ministry. All of these topics were addressed, as well as the challenges that Catholic Scouting is facing around the world. Chairman Barnes then outlined a brief history of the NCCS and its relationship to the Catholic Church through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and to the Boy Scouts of America through the Relationships Division. Fr. Mitch then pointed out to the audience and viewers how important Catholic Scouting is to our young people and how more Catholic youth should be involved in Scouting.

At the end of the show, it was clear that there was a better understanding of Catholic Scouting. Numerous calls were received, not only at the NCCS office in Irving, but at the television station. Barnes later commented that several days after the show he received an email from the Chief Scout in Malta who watched the show, and whom coincidentally he had met earlier this year while traveling on behalf of the International Catholic Conference of Scouting.

This opportunity was truly a highlight for the NCCS and went a long way to get our message out to the world.

ICCS International Forum Scheduled in Spring 2007

The International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS) will host a forum “Ways of Justice for Peace” from April 9 to 15, 2007 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. This forum will offer an opportunity for young Catholic leaders to meet and exchange experiences and reflections on the occasion of the Centenary of Scouting and Scouting’s contribution to the church and society. The main focus will be sharing of testimonies on the work and commitment for peace and justice in different areas in which Scouting is involved.

Participants will be young leaders, chaplains, and other committed persons who are at least 18 years old.

For further information go to http://www.cics.org

This forum and other activities of the ICCS are made possible in part by support from the ICCS Endowment Fund established by the NCCS. Contributions are still needed to reach our goal of $20,000 to supplement the $80,000 allocated from NCCS general funds. To make a donation send your check to the NCCS office and note on the check
Established for NCCS

In response to our on-line survey, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting has established a new information sharing website, nccs-bsa.info. This site is the dynamic-information brother to the NCCS website. The nccs-bsa.org website contains information for the general public on our emblems, awards, activities, and committee reports. Although the information does change over time, time is measured in years.

At the present time, the Information Sharing website offers two channels for sharing information. The first is an electronic newsletter that we are calling the eBridge. It is our intent to "publish" the newsletter monthly and for it to contain time-sensitive deadlines, late-breaking announcements, and special interest information at the national, regional, and local level. Articles and announcements can be submitted to the editor at eBridgeNews@nccs-bsa.info. The deadline for articles will be seven days before the end of the month. We reserve the right to edit information for clarity and not publish information if we feel it does not meet the needs of the reading audience.

The second vehicle is an Information Board, calendar, and sharing forum. In addition to archives of the eBridge, registered users can add replies to established categories and topics. All memberships will be approved by a NCCS group moderator before a member can use the service. In addition to general information forums where anyone can read the messages, but only registered members can add or reply to the messages, there will also be other forums that will be restricted to registered members only. Visit our new information website at nccs-bsa.info.

NCCS NEWS NOTES:

Continue your prayers for Susan Barriball for a speedy recovery.

Please keep Father Dan Mode and Father Jerry Fehn in your prayers as they continue to serve our country as Military Chaplains. Pray also for those they minister to.

IN MEMORIAM: Ruth Kam Ung Wong, 84, of Honolulu, wife of Jimmie Wong, who died on Oct. 1, 2006. Also survived by sons Garrett, Warren and Darrell; and nine grandchildren. May God grant her perpetual rest.

Chairman’s Message by Bray Barnes

Well, the Scouting year has begun and I hope that all of you are looking forward to new and exciting programs. I would like to talk about a topic that is not very popular but must be addressed – membership numbers.

Based upon the BSA Relationships Division membership reports, Catholic Scouts total approximately 287,000 in about 500 units. There has been a loss of almost 70,000 Catholic Scouts over the past 3 to 5 years. I know that a lot of you say that we are not in the numbers business, but when we consider whom we are to be reaching as youth ministers, one cannot help to take notice that those we are to be serving are decreasing in numbers and we need to do something about it!

Everyone should be aware by now about the Knights of Columbus membership growth plan. If you are not, I ask that you contact your diocesan or regional chair or chaplain, as they will be happy to tell you about this great opportunity. At the national level, we are working with the Military Archdiocese to establish Scout units on military posts throughout the country so that a youth ministry program can be provided to the dependents of our service men and women. We are also looking to make more of an effort to work with the Hispanic community and have started to take steps to build that relationship.

I am sure that there are parishes in your community that do not have a scout pack, troop or crew or may have only one unit. Did you know that 80 percent of our charter partners sponsor only one unit? Why not two or all three? Certainly, we have the religious emblems program that appeals to each age level and can be utilized in a pack, troop and Venturing crew. Therefore, let’s encourage our parishes and Knights of Columbus councils to provide a youth ministry program for all ages by sponsoring the whole family of scouting.

Recently, I attended the Region One Conference. It is always a pleasure to be a part of this gathering and drive through New England in the Fall. Regional Chair Art Keegan and Regional Chaplain Fr. Steve Salvador always do an outstanding job with this conference, certainly with the help of the local committees. This year was no exception as the Archdiocese of Hartford exceeded the expectations of those in attendance. I spoke to the regional members about our membership and the need to reach out to our Catholic youth. Both the regional chair and chaplain not only spoke about the many youth ministry activities Scouting has to offer, but emphasized to their membership that they were a resource to support them in all that they do. I am sure the same is true within your region. Do not hesitate to contact your regional chair and/or chaplain to assist you with your program and to tell you about the membership growth opportunities that are available.

NCCS CALENDAR

February 15 Nominations due to NCCS for Silver St. George Award
April 17-21 Standing Committee, Advisory and Executive Board Meeting—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
July 27—Aug 8 World Jamboree—Hylands Park, Chelmsford England
July 29—Aug 4 Scouting in the Catholic Church Training Course at Philmont Scout Ranch

The Bridge is an authorized publication of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS). It is published quarterly to provide news and information to members of the NCCS, Diocesan Catholic Committees, Youth Ministry personnel and Boy Scout Councils.

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NCCS Website  http://www.nccs-bsa.org/
John and Julie Doerr have once again consented to fund the Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarship. This will be the third year that NCCS has been able to offer this unique opportunity to our Catholic young men and women who are registered in a BSA Troop or Crew and are high school seniors. The scholarships range from $1,000 to $2,500.

Emmett was very dedicated and committed to Scouting and NCCS. His big heart was only exceeded by his generosity. He was the first recipient of the Brother Barnabas Founders Award and he was also recognized with the Silver Antelope, Silver Beaver, and the St. George medals. Emmett’s love for Scouting, especially Catholic Scouting, is the reason why the Doerr family wants to ensure that his legacy continues.

The purpose of the Doerr Scholarship is to reward the three most distinguished high school seniors who are Catholic Scouts. This can only be done with your help and support. The two key things that will make our efforts successful are spreading the word and follow through. We need to ensure that not only our local Diocesan Committees and Catholic sponsored troops and crews participate, but that the local Councils are aware, as well as non-Catholic sponsored units that could have a Catholic senior in their midst. The Doerr Scholarship is being offered on a five year trail basis and if it is to continue beyond that then we need to ensure that we receive plenty of applications for the remaining three years.

The write-up and application for the Doerr Scholarship can be found on-line. Once you access www.nccs-bsa.org, click on forms/literature. On the left hand side you will find a link to the requirements for the scholarship. The form can be found by clicking on site map and going to the word document or pdf link. Let me (john.halloran@us.army.mil) or Barb Nestel, the NCCS Secretary (nccs@netbsa.org) know if you want us send you these documents. The deadline for the completed packet is no later than 1 April. The 3x5 color photo should be a head and shoulder shot, preferably in a scout uniform or appropriate civilian attire. Please send all the requested documentation to Barb at NCCS-BSA ATTN: Barb Nestel, P.O. Box 152079 Irving, TX 75015-2079.

Bishop Timothy A. McDonnell of the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, presented 11 Ad Altare Dei emblems, 18 Pope Pius XII emblems and 2 St. George emblems at the 52nd annual Bishop's Awards Mass at St. Michaels Cathedral in Springfield on October 22. Reverend Eugene J. Plasse, Diocesan Chaplain, is on the left with Bishop McDonnell and some of the youth recipients.

In 1973 the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus voted a grant of $50,000 to underwrite a training program for adult Catholic Scouters for a five-year period. The first such training session was held at Philmont Scout Ranch in June of 1974, with 60 Catholic Scouters from throughout the nation in attendance. Associate National Chaplain Fr. John Rice led the first course. The Knights later extended the grant for another five years. There have been 33 annual courses to date. A total of about 1,845 priests and lay people have participated. Attendance reached a high of 90 in 1979 but only 24 in 2005. The faculty typically has been four or five NCCS volunteers plus members of the BSA Relationships staff. These courses have immensely helped strengthen local diocesan committees and produced many NCCS members and leaders.
Seattle: Light is Life Awards

On September 19, 2006 six Seattle area Scouts received the Light is Life religious emblem. Scouts of Eastern Catholic churches work on the Light of Life rather than the Ad Altare Dei. The Light is Life program features an emphasis on religious practice and experience over academic studies.

The presentations, which were the first ever for Scouts in this part of the country, were part of the gala celebration of the 25th Jubilee of the founding of St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Parish in Seattle, one of the Eastern Catholic Parishes of the Eparchy of Van Nuys, whose eparchial headquarters is in Phoenix, Arizona. The presentations followed an Eparchial Divine Liturgy of St. John

The presentations were made by Mitered Archpriest Stephen Washko of Phoenix, Arizona, Eparchy of Van Nuys Scouting Chaplain and Father Nicholas Rachford, NCCS Region 15 Chaplain, and author of the Light is Life program and Pastor of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Lorain, Ohio.

Denver: Chaplains Aide Training

by Amy McNeil

The Denver Area Council has revived a training course for Troop Chaplain Aides, which is now offered to youth during their University of Scouting, or Chautauqua, in March each year. Through the efforts of Diana Kullman and Amy McNeil, the Council was able to put together a six-hour program for current or newly elected Troop Chaplain Aides, as well as Troop Chaplains. Over the past two years 24 scouts and seven adults have completed the Chaplain Aide Training Course. The staff for the most recent session consisted of Eagle Scout Phil Lindeman, Eagle Scout Chase Wathen, and Eagle Candidate Nick Roberts.

The course can be taught either over several nights, one Saturday, or during a weekend retreat. The Denver Council held it at the same time other Boy Scouts are attending the Youth Supplemental Leadership Training Course (YSLTC) at Chautauqua. Normally the Chaplain Aide position is only briefly talked about during YSLTC.

The syllabus then goes right into how the Chaplains Aide is a role model of the Scout oath and law for his troop, how to be “sensitive” to all scouts and the different situations that could arise. Then, of course, there is the promotion of religious emblems and maintenance of troop records. Ironically, some of the participants did not know about the different religious emblems of the faiths, so there were displays of the actual medals from various faiths. After a break for lunch, all participants got down to the business of creating their first worship service. The Scouts were put into groups and each group was responsible for creating a component of the service. This took up much of the afternoon work, but when it was completed, the Scouts conducted their worship service for the other Scout attendees. That way, the Scouts attending the leadership training got to see exactly what the TCA does for the troop. The Council was pleased at how this training benefited both groups.

Tempe, Ariz.: 10 Commandment Hike

By David Gironda

For the eleventh year, on the Friday after Thanksgiving, the Tempe, Ariz. Scout Council’s Interfaith Committee held their annual Ten Commandment Hike. This year it was in and around the campus of Arizona State University in Tempe. This event is for all Boy and Cub Scouts, Girl and Brownie Scouts, Camp Fire USA members and other youth, and their families. There were 310 participants who walked to each worship site, where a Commandment was explained and then the host speaker described their beliefs and the house of worship. The hike started about 8 a.m. at the sound of the Shofar, stopped midway for a bag lunch, and ended late in the afternoon back where the group started.

Bloomington, Minn: Hymnals to Louisiana Church

When their parish purchased new Mass books and hymnals, the parishioners at Nativity of Mary in Bloomington, Minn., wondered what to do with the old ones, since they were still very usable. A conversation with NCCS’ Fr. Steve Brandow of Tioga, Louisiana, led to a great idea to send them to a parish that suffered from Hurricane Katrina. So with the help of boys from the parish’s Cub pack 374 and Scout troop 374, 42 boxes of Worship II and Gather books were packed up and shipped south. That’s about 840 books that found their way into the hands of parishioners at a parish in Ball, La.