Elections nearing for regional and vice-chair positions

This year one third of the 15 regional chair and chaplain positions will be open to election. And, under the NCCS bylaws, two of the four vice chair positions will be up for reelection as well. The NCCS regional chairs and chaplains serve three-year terms while vice chairs serve two-year terms. Between now and the end of the calendar year, Regions 2, 3, 7, 9, and 14 will have elections for Chairman, and Regions 1, 5, 6, 12, 15 will have elections for Chaplain.

All voting members will receive a ballot to elect two new Vice Chairs. The NCCS voting membership consists of all diocesan chairmen and chaplains, NCCS Executive Board and NCCS Advisory Board members. Regional ballots will be sent to those voting members in the region.

Contact information for current NCCS office holders may be found at: http://www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/nccs-contacts

To assist in the voting the expectations for regional chairs and chaplains may be found at: http://www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/diocesan-training/nccs-fast-start-training.

Should you have an interest in serving and sharing your talents on a NCCS committee, please contact Ed Martin at martinedp@outlook.com or email Elizabeth Olivas in the national office at nccs@scouting.org.

Similar to BSA Journey to Excellence

New Catholic Unit Excellence Award to debut in 2017

By John Anthony

Beginning in 2017 the National Catholic Unit Excellence Award will be the Quality Unit Award. The award will be more similar to the BSA Journey to Excellence Program in that there will a point system based on ten areas of performance valued by our chartering organizations. They are as follows:

- Planning
- Growth
- Retention
- Religious Emblems
- Religious Activities
- Service
- Vocation
- Training
- Emblem Counselor
- Diocesan Participation

There will be a bronze, silver, and gold level of achievement. For the bronze level, a unit must receive a score of 400 points in seven areas; for the silver level 700 points are required in eight areas; and for the gold level, 1,000 points will be needed in nine areas. The complete requirements will be posted on the NCCS website after the first of the year along with a list of the recognition items.
As I write my article I am sitting under the Philmont Training Center office pavilion on a beautiful fall day. Experiencing the natural beauty of Philmont reinforces the awareness that this is truly “God’s country!” I’ve just finished producing a “You Tube” welcome message for the NCCS Region 7 conference on October 1. Region 1 held their conference on October 2, as did Region 2. Region 3 held their conference on September 10-11. I congratulate Region 1 Chair John Meakin, Jr. and Chaplain Fr. Leo LeBlanc; Region 2 Chair Richard Touchette and Chaplain Msgr. Jim Lang; Region 3 Chair Fred Shetter and Chaplain Fr. Michael Santangelo and Region 7 Chair Chris Brandt and Chaplain Fr. Mark Carr on holding successful conferences. I strongly encourage each of our regions to hold an annual conference to help guide their dioceses to “Renew, Rebuild and Rejoice” in strengthening Catholic Scouting!

Fr. Kevin and I are pleased to announce the appointment of Kathy Polowski as the director of our 2017 “Scouting in the Catholic Church” Conference to be held at the Philmont Training Center July 16 – 22, 2017. When it comes to implementing “Scouting as Youth Ministry” this is the course to take.

2017 will see the 19th National Scout Jamboree, which will held at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve. NCCS will have a presence in the Faith and Beliefs area and will be teaching Catholic Scouts about the rosary while they make their own rosary. The NCCS exhibition is being headed up by Past National Chair, Bill Davies.

I wish a very Blessed Christmas and New Year to each of you. This is the time of year to be thankful for all that we have and to share in the joy of celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ!

The most pressing issue that the Religious Emblems committee has been facing is the publication of revised editions of the Pope Pius XII participant and facilitator manuals. We are happy to report that they are reasonably confident that publication will likely occur in early 2017.

The release of the new edition will inevitably lead to questions concerning which participant manual should be used. Facilitators will have to adopt a flexible approach when the situation arises. Obviously, anyone who is already working on the Emblem using the old manual should finish using that document. Additionally, we can reasonably expect that our suppliers will continue to have an inventory of current manuals that they will have to exhaust prior to providing the newest edition.

No mandatory changeover date will be adopted at this point in time, however, the committee will monitor the situation and recommend a sunset date for the current Pius XII manual to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting leadership as circumstances dictate. The last thing we want to do is to deny a youth the opportunity to earn the Pope Pius XII Emblem.

Pope Pius XII manuals scheduled for printing in early 2017

By
Bill Guglielmi, Chair
Religious Emblems Committee

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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To submit items for future editions of The Bridge please contact Mike Gannon at scouttrain@aol.com. Photos are acceptable and should be in a jpeg format. Please ensure all people in photos are identified and the subject matter is fully described.
Dear Catholic Scouters,

If you are like me, you can get so busy “doing” that you forget why you are doing it. Advent is a gift of time in the midst of all this busyness that challenges us to slow down and stay awake and not miss the “reason for the season”. Advent gives us a chance to prepare ourselves for the greatest gift given to us at Christmas, our Savior Jesus Christ. We can get so caught in the preparations for Christmas that we might miss the subtle ways in which Jesus is coming to us in a different way this season.

Advent gives us the opportunity to not only prepare for the Nativity, but also to prepare for His second coming. Isaiah says we need to become childlike in our openness for peace and tranquility which our Savior brings and Jesus challenges His disciples to open their eyes and ears to see and hear what has been hidden from the learned but been revealed to the childlike.

So, maybe we need to take a lesson from the youth that we serve and open our eyes and ears and hearts to the awesome power of God in our lives. Let’s see Christmas through their eyes this year. Not looking back, but looking forward to the possibility of welcoming more young people into Catholic Scouting. Truly living out the Oath and Law and giving thanks to God for the gift of faith that makes all things possible.

May you and your families have a happy and blessed Christmas. Please be assured of my prayers for you at all my Christmas Masses.

Peace and Prayers,

Fr. Kevin

Do you enjoy meeting new people? Learning about our Catholic faith? Working with youth? Exploring the outdoors? Viewing wildlife? Do you want to learn more about Scouting and youth ministry? Discover resources to use in your Scouting programs? Find out how to implement NCCS programs at unit and diocesan levels? Inspire our Scouts and others?

If you answered “YES” to any of these questions, then Scouting in the Catholic Church conference at the Philmont Training Center in New Mexico is for you!!

Each year, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) conducts this training session for religious and lay participants of varied background and experience, who gather together from around the country to enjoy a week of learning, fellowship and fun.

The goals of the conference are to help participants understand how Scouting is Catholic youth ministry, learn about Catholic Scouting resources and use the information in the course to promote Catholic Scouting in their home dioceses and councils. Bring your family! The Philmont Training Center has many excellent programs for family members of all ages...all at a reasonable price! You will have time to explore Philmont and the surrounding area in the evenings and Wednesday afternoon. Don’t miss the opportunity to join us for an inspirational, fun filled week! For more information about the course or the PTC you are welcome to contact the 2017 Course Director, Kathy Polowski, at kpolo55@gmail.com or call 480-244-6806. You can also access information about the Philmont Training Center and our conference by visiting the following link: www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc.aspx

The NCCS Hosted their annual “Breakfast for Bishops” at the US Conference of Catholic Bishops General Assembly in November. Bishop Robert Guglielmone, assisted by Fr. Kevin Smith, NCCS National Chaplain; Fr. Michael Hanifin, past National Chaplain; and Fr. Joseph Powers, Associate National Chaplain, presented an update on NCCS activity, and requested assistance for priests and seminarians to serve as chaplains at the upcoming BSA National Jamboree, at Philmont Scout Ranch and on the St. George Trek. They also recognized Bishop Kevin Vann, Diocese of Orange, for his significant support of Catholic Scouting, and Bishop William Murphy, Diocese of Rockville Center, who received the Miter Society medallion for financial support of the St. George Trek.
Diocesan Committees urged to audit unit registrations to ensure proper coding of the chartering partners

By John Anthony

The months of December and January are the time of year for the local Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting to meet with their local BSA councils registration departments to review current Catholic organizations. Recently the Diocesan Catholic Committee in Fort Worth conducted their audit. The Diocese of Fort Worth encompasses parts of Longhorn, Circle Ten, Northwestern Texas and Texas Trails councils, and the results showed that two Episcopal Churches were coded as Catholic, a Knights of Columbus council was miscoded and a church was listed in the Diocese of Dallas by mistake.

This year the audit is extremely important due to the fact that Knights of Columbus units need to be transferred to other Catholic organizations which include these with the code 039:

- Catholic Church, Roman Catholic
- Holy Name Society, Roman Catholic
- Hospitals, Roman Catholic
- Men's Clubs, Roman Catholic
- Other Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)

and/or code: 339

Catholic Schools

Please remember in your prayers the following Catholic Scouters:

- Leo Koller, NCCS long-time member
- Barbara Cannon, wife of Austin Cannon
- Sam Bridgeman, NCCS long-time member
- Dorothy Dean, Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Committee
- Mile Kosiba, NCCS long-time member

Let perpetual light shine upon them

Have a blessed Christmas
Fr. Don Hummel honored by Philmont Staff Association

Editor’s Note: Fr. Don Hummel, who has served more than 25 years as a Philmont Scout Chaplain, was recently elected the NE Region Director of the Philmont Staff Association. In that role, he will represent staff alumni of the Philmont Scout Ranch and Training Center for a 3-year term beginning January 1, 2017. (You may view the complete PhilNews article on Fr. Don at: http://philmontscoutranch.org/filestore/philmont/pdf/Philnews_2016/2016PhilNews_Issue8.pdf

Rev. Donald K. Hummel was ordained a Roman Catholic priest for the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey in 1978. During his priesthood, Father Don has served a variety of assignments in Jersey City, Kearny, North Bergen, and Westfield and as a pastor in Scotch Plains. He currently serves as a full-time chaplain and teacher at Paramus Catholic High School. He is grateful to be back full-time in education since among other things – it affords him the opportunity to continue serving as a Philmont Chaplain. 2016 was his 25th consecutive year!

With Scouting and NCCS, he has served as national chaplain and currently serves as the advisor to the NCCS Membership Committee. He has been a member of the International Catholic Scouting Foundation, several council executive boards, NE Region Board, several national task forces; and, he was present at the birth of the NCCS St. George Trek in 1992.

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting has recognized his service with the Silver St. George and Brother Barnabas Founders Award. For his service and support of Scouting in the Jewish community, he was recognized by the National Jewish Committee on Scouting with the Shofar Award.

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Learning for Life. NCCS National Chairman George Sparks (in uniform) signs the MOU with Learning for Life National Director Dr. Diane Thornton (left) and NCCS National Chaplain Fr. Kevin Smith (right). They signed the memorandum at the National Scouting Museum in Irving, Texas, on Wednesday, October 19.

Ever wonder if you really make a difference by being involved in Catholic Scouting?

Do your efforts really matter?

The good news: YES, you do make a difference!

In a survey of the 2015 class of Ordinands to the Priesthood in the United States, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University found that Parish youth groups (46%) and Boy Scouting (31%) topped the list of Church-sponsored programs and activities in which ordinands to the priesthood in the class of 2015 participated. See the full report at http://www.usccb.org/.../up.../Class-of-2015-report-FINAL-V2.pdf.

Remember Scouting is Youth Ministry!

For more information on the NCCS Vocations Program go to http://www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/standing-committees/vocations
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

Can you believe that this edition of *The Bridge* is Volume 25, Number 4? Or would you believe our NCCS newsletter has been published for about 80 years now? Eighty years!

My earliest copy is Vol. XXXI (31) dated 1969 and titled *Scouting Bulletin* (this series was printed on heavy blue paper). That indicates that Vol. I appeared in the mid-1930s (a few Volumes spanned two calendar years). I also have a copy of a 1944 page 1 of its predecessor, *Chaplains Bulletin*, Volume VIII.

In 1977 a new editor changed the name to the [NCCS] Newsletter. Fifteen years later it got a new masthead and became *The Bridge*. Color photos appeared for the first time in September 2004. Issues now range from four to twelve pages. Most were published quarterly, although for several years there were three or fewer issues a year.

From November 2006 to July 2009 there also was a companion e-mail edition, the eBridge. Editors were Tony Madonia and then Karen Stone.

So why are we only at Volume 25 today? Well, Vol XLIX (49) was the last in the Roman numeral series back in 1987. The next six years had no volume number indicated. The current series started with Volume 1 again. All told, that’s probably between 250 and 300 issues.

Hats off to the two editors of the past twenty years! Chris Hoelle edited for eight years, and Mike Gannon for a dozen already.

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2017 Annual Appeal Underway

In **2016** the National Catholic Committee on Scouting was able to:

- **Provide** a Catholic emphasis to more than 236,000 Scouts in 7,582 Catholic chartered units
- **Award** six $2,000 scholarships to deserving Catholic youth in Scouting
- **Ensure** full-time Catholic chaplain coverage at Philmont Scout Ranch
- **Train** Scouters in the *Scouting in the Catholic Church Training Conference* at Philmont Scout Ranch and other venues across the country
- **Award** more than 17,000 religious emblems and nearly 12,000 Religious activity patches

In **2017** with your help, we hope to equal or better these achievements PLUS:

- **Serve** the 30,000 Scouts and 6,500 Scouters attending the National Boy Scout Jamboree with Catholic Chaplains
- **Support** the Catholic Chaplains who will serve the nearly 30,000 Scouts and 6,500 Scouters who will attend the National Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve
- **Continue** to support *Scouting is Youth Ministry!*

You can send your contribution to:

**National Catholic Committee on Scouting**
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-29079

or donate online at: [www.nccsannualfund.kintera.org.bsa](http://www.nccsannualfund.kintera.org.bsa)
NCCS Action Plan in Response to Knights of Columbus’ Announcement to End Chartering of Scout Units

NCCS:
1. Produce letter to all Catholic Scouters reporting Knights of Columbus decision.
2. Distribute letter to all NCCS members and diocesan committee leadership.
3. Post letter to NCCS website and Facebook page.
4. Develop action plan for all diocesan Catholic Committees on Scouting.
5. Obtain list from BSA of all units by diocese chartered by Knights of Columbus councils/assemblies.
6. Facilitate resolution of diocesan issues and track progress of transition.

Diocesan Catholic Committees on Scouting:
1. Local Committee chairman or designee contact local Scout executive to offer assistance.
2. Identify units chartered to Knights of Columbus and their councils, their unit leaders and Grand Knights.
3. Discuss with unit leadership the implications and concerns with transferring charter. Confirm interest in transferring leadership and other support. Develop plan for dealing with concerns.
4. Identify potential parishes in which to transfer units.
5. Arrange for meeting with parish pastor, unit leadership and BSA executive to discuss potential for transferring charter.
6. If the unit isn’t transferred to the local parish, another Catholic entity must be secured to charter the unit, doing all we can to maintain their Catholic identity.
7. Assist in completing paperwork, as directed by and submitted to the BSA executive, which includes a letter from the Knights of Columbus, releasing the Scout unit to the parish.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
Q1. Does the unit lose its tenure and number when the charter is transferred to another organization?
A1. It is possible to retain the tenure and unit number. Your local Scout executive can assist in making this happen.

Q2. What if the local parish is not an option?
A2. In such cases, we recommend looking for another Catholic parish, Catholic school or Catholic organization that would accept the charter.

Q3. Who may I contact at NCCS should I have a problem or question?
A3. The NCCS Program Administrator, Elizabeth Olivas, may be reached at 972-580-2114 or at nccs@scouting.org
MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW TO ATTEND

NCCS Annual Meeting
April 27-30

Peppermill Resort Spa
Reno, Nevada

It’s not too late to make your plans for the 2017 Annual Meeting of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting being held from April 27 to April 30. There will be meetings of the national standing committees, regional leaders, Advisory and Executive Boards, etc., as well as opportunities to interface with Catholic Scouters and Chaplains from archdioceses, dioceses, and eparchies from around the country.

The Executive Committee and several standing committee meetings, registration, and the Trading Post begin on Thursday afternoon, April 27, and the opening Mass is at 6:15 p.m. Advisory Board meetings are on Friday morning, April 28th, and Saturday morning, April 29th. Region leaders meet on Friday morning and afternoon, April 28. Standing committees meet again on Friday afternoon, April 28, and Saturday afternoon, April 29. A Saturday vigil Mass for the third Sunday of Easter will take place at the hotel, followed by a reception and the annual Banquet. The Executive Board meets on Sunday morning, April 30, and Region 11 plans to conduct a convocation and training program on Sunday morning and afternoon, April 30, and the Executive Committee also meets on Sunday afternoon, April 30.

The conference, which will be held at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino (https://www.peppermillreno.com/resort/), will have room rates at either $69 or $89 per night. The $89 rooms are in the tower (Peppermill Tower) directly above our conference meeting rooms, and the $69 rooms are in a 2-story wing (Peppermill North/West) connected to our conference meeting area via an enclosed walkway. Look for room reservations and conference registration information very soon on the NCCS website at www.nccs-bsa.org.