Change is always difficult, but change can also be very good. The Religious Activities Committee learned that when they were looking at the existing activities, some of the programs in the American Saint Series were not getting as much attention as they hoped. As a result they have decided to archive seven activities to allow room for new ones. Archiving means that the activity/patch will not be listed on the NCCS Religious Activity web page, but individuals will still be available to order the patches, until the supply is exhausted. Below are the activities that will be archived:

Andre Bessette
Frances Xavier Cabrini
Peter Claver
Marie Durocher
Mother Theodore Guerin
Isidore the Farmer
Carlos Rodriguez

This means that if your diocese/unit would like to offer these American Saint Series activities, they need to order them soon. Our projected archive date is August 31. There will be an announcement from NCCS when the new activities are ready to be released!

The Training Committee has been very busy over the last year working to bring more relevant and timely materials to all Catholic units. The committee is looking to add new retreat ideas that are not Activity Award of Excellence ideas, and moving the Religious Trails activity to a different format – perhaps Google 360 Virtual Tours. No firm dates have been set as the preliminary work is ongoing.

At the 45th Biennial meeting, the Training Committee proposed an initiative to develop more materials under eLearning so as to parallel training developments within the BSA’s online learning center, ScoutingU. Initially, the Training Committee has proposed an initiative to develop more materials under eLearning so as to parallel training developments within the BSA’s online learning center, ScoutingU. They are also developing modules that would supplement BSA’s Chartered Organizational Representative (COR) online training. The goal is to complete the work by the October meeting of the Executive Committee. An online learning environment has the potential to provide 24/7 access for new and seasoned CORs who are looking to better understand how to ensure Catholic - chartered units can excel. Their expectation is that most of the e-learning materials will not exceed thirty minutes in length. While e-learning has many benefits in today’s busy and overbooked schedules the committee is still committed to developing face-to-face materials in support of the NCCS Regions and local (arch) diocesan committees. Currently under review is a training for Pow-Wow and Scouting University. This program will help (arch) diocesan committees promote the updated Pope Paul VI, Catholic Unit Award of Excellence. They hope to have materials ready by this fall or spring 2019.

The committee also asks regional chairs to reach out to them if they need support for the development of training materials for Regional conferences or other events.
Family Scouting program benefits youth and families

By
Jim Weiskircher

For years, boys and girls from around the world have shared the same scouting programs. In the United States, families have had to go in different directions to find programs to meet the needs of their children. Pope Francis during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia called for a new alliance between the Church and the family. The family scouting program attempts to address these concerns.

Whether or not to serve girls is up to the chartered organization. We believe giving young women the same opportunities as young men benefits youth, families, and our communities. Serving girls through the programs of the Boy Scouts of America is a tremendous opportunity to bring more youth into your parish. The choice is strictly up to the chartered organization.

The exciting thing for chartered organizations is now you can have one program that meets the need of boys and girls alike and for differing ages, from kindergarten through age 20, with no need to juggle separate programs. It’s a proven, exciting program that’s been positively affecting young people for decades, ready-made for today.

Chairman’s Corner

BY GEORGE SPARKS

Renew – Rebuild – REJOICE

As I enter the third year of my service as your chairman I want to thank all those who have taken our theme to heart: Renew – Rebuild – Rejoice! It is my hope that we can continue to strengthen Catholic Scouting with quality membership and unit growth, top notch training programs and superior programs and activities for our Scouts!

In this issue I wish to address one of the keys to success in growing any organization and that is a concept called RELATIONSHIPS. I spent the last ten years of my professional service in the Relationships Operations of the Boy Scouts of America. Everything we do successfully is built on relationships that we develop and nurture over time.

On whom should we focus our Relationships-building? Diocesan Committee leaders would find it advisable to build or strengthen the relationship with their bishop. An annual discussion would include a report of the state of Catholic Scouting in the diocese listing accomplishments of the prior year. If possible bring an older Scout along who has participated in Catholic Scouting activities, i.e. St. George Trek, the Catholic Retreat or Camporee, or a vocation discernment activity. The meeting needn’t be long, the bishop is a busy person, and the discussion should be a snapshot of Catholic Scouting in the diocese.

A similar meeting could be held with the executive officer of the chartered partner. In most cases it would be the pastor of the parish. Again, a couple of leaders and a Scout could report on the state of Catholic Scouting in the parish; including activities such as service projects done for the parish, religious emblems earned and other accomplishments which have helped the Scouts grow in their faith.

Remember, we are not a secular program meeting in a church facility; we need to emphasize the concept that Catholic Scouting is Youth Ministry and strengthen our relationship with tangible examples.

For more information on Catholic Scouting go to http://www.ncs-bsa.org/
Or like us on Facebook

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.
Two NCCS members honored with Brother Barnabas Award

At the 45th Biennial Conference in Minneapolis, Bill Davies and Ed Martin were honored with Brother Barnabas Founders Awards. They became only the 18th and 19th recipients in the history of the NCCS to receive the honor.

The Brother Barnabas Founders Award is a special recognition for long and meritorious service that has significantly affected the course of Catholic Scouting. Brother Barnabas, F.S.C., a Brother of the Christian Schools, was involved with youth work for his entire life. He was a driving force in the early years of Catholic youth ministry founding one of the earliest Catholic troops at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in 1912.

He is credited with creating the formal association between the Catholic bishops of the United States and the Boy Scouts of America that is now known as the National Catholic Committee on Scouting.

Bill Davies served as National Chair from 2007-2010 and currently serves as Finance Chair. He was deemed worthy of the Brother Barnabas Founders Award for reasons that include not only his 25 years of continuous service to Catholic Scouting, with most of that time as an Executive Board member, but also his significant contributions to the development and growth of relationships with our chartering organizations, the BSA and other national faith-based organizations.

In addition, he led major changes in our organization structure and renegotiated our agreement with BSA in support of our Program Administrator position. His passion for promoting the opportunity of Catholic Scouting and dedication to building relationships both inside and outside of the NCCS have directly and positively affected the organization’s reputation and well-being for a quarter century.

Ed Martin was deemed worthy of the Brother Barnabas Founders Award for his continuous service to the NCCS since 1986. As National Chair from 2013-2016, he led the organization through BSA’s changes in its youth and adult membership policies and the decision of the Knights of Columbus to discontinue chartering Scout units. He responded by compiling a set of FAQs and responses that became a standard for clarifying the changes and their impact on Catholic-chartered units, in addition to participating in promotional videos and initiating a successful Membership Initiative.

As the Finance Chair, he established an on-going biennial incentive to increase membership donations and a fund-raiser to support the St. George Trek. As Training Chair, he formalized NCCS’ training curriculum and led the revision of both the Scouter Development program (aka National Catholic Leadership Development program), the Scouting in the Catholic Church course, and development of Fast Start training for Executive Board members.
WHAT – The St. George Trek is a biennial, high adventure, backpacking retreat program for Catholic Scouts and Venture Crew members, administered by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting in cooperation with the Boy Scouts of America’s Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico. The program begins and ends in Albuquerque, New Mexico; however the hike itself takes place at the Philmont Scout Ranch.

PURPOSE – Philmont’s high adventure backpacking experience is placed within the context of a retreat program dedicated to assisting a scout’s awareness of his or her Christian vocation with a particular emphasis on the vocations of Priesthood and Religious Life. The adult advisors for each crew of 8-10 scouts are therefore priests, religious men and women, and seminarians. The advisors fulfill the role of adult supervision in a youth led crew, while at the same time literally walk with the scouts who will come to a deeper understand of the advisor’s vocation. The presence of advisors on the trail gives the scouts an opportunity to experience the sacraments and the church’s life of prayer on a daily basis as they hike through “God’s Country”

GOAL - Scouts create two Covenant Commitments. The first covenant is to Almighty God which the scout keeps to him or herself. This covenant is one that hopefully opens the scout to God’s vocational call. The second covenant is to their sponsoring diocese stating how they plan to be of service to the Church through Catholic Scouting. These covenant commitments help the participant to recognize the serious commitment of participating in the St. George Trek.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS/SELECTION -

Each Arch/Diocese/Eparchy is encouraged to conduct a search and nominate one or two Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts or Venture Crew members for participation in the Trek. Selection of participants is made by the individual Arch/Diocese and should be made on the basis of demonstrated maturity, physical ability, leadership potential, an interest in the life of the Church and openness to the discernment of vocation. Candidates should be emotionally mature adolescents who will be fifteen years of age on or before July 1, 2019 and committed to assist their Catholic Committee when they return home. They must also have the physical, mental and emotional health and stamina to backpack on the mountain trails of Philmont. **NO exceptions can be made.**
APPLICATION INFORMATION AND FORMS:
Available on the website http://nccs-bsa.org/ScoutUnits/StGeorgeTrek.php

Fees—
$900.00 per participant.
The fee will cover:
All Philmont Scout Ranch fees, Retreat House lodging in Albuquerque, Philmont and Retreat House Meals, Roundtrip Chartered bus travel between Albuquerque and Philmont

Not Included in Fee
Transportation to and from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Personal gear, Normal personal expenses

Fee Schedule—
• A deposit of $225 per participant will be requested upon acceptance.
• October 1, 2018- Second payment due $225.
• December 1, 2018 - Third payment due $225.
Final payment is due February 1, 2019 $225. The Arch/diocese is expected to underwrite Registration costs for participants. Financial assistance is available. Arch/diocese must submit the scholarship request form for financial aid consideration. Grants will be made on the basis of demonstrated financial need and first come basis.

A successful program for the discernment of vocations to priesthood and religious life – In the last 5 years at least 12 participants entered formation programs for the Archdioceses of St. Louis and Washington, the dioceses of Rockville Centre, Knoxville, Austin, Grand Rapids, LaCrosse, Pittsburgh, Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Austin, Charleston, and the religious communities of the Adorno Fathers and the Nashville Dominicans. Three former participants have also been ordained to the priesthood.

Questions may be addressed to:
stgeorgetrek@gmail.com

"Not many are able to experience the awesome power of climbing Mt Baldy, or the Tooth of Time. Far fewer get to receive the precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Word who created these landmarks once at the top."

Seminarian Brian DeFazio
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

Religious emblems are church programs, not Scout programs. Catholic programs for boys and girls registered with the BSA are created and administered by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. Catholic programs for other boys and girls such as members of Girl Scouts and American Heritage Girls are part of a subcommittee of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry. Adult recognitions are similarly available.

Youth of other faiths should pursue programs offered through their faith belief group. Encourage these Scouts to pursue the programs pertinent to their own belief. The BSA may authorize emblems of such programs to be worn on the uniform upon approved application by a national religious organization.

Six Awarded Emmett Doerr Scholarships

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) is pleased to announce the winners of the Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarships for 2018. The recipients are: Gabriel C. Bartunek, Fargo, N.D., diocese of Fargo; Gregory Bycraft, Granger, Ind., diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend; Lawrence M. Eiden, Ann Arbor, Mich., diocese of Lansing; Robert Frei, Weldon Spring, Mo., diocese of St. Louis; Ryan J. Garcia, Kailua, Hawaii, diocese of Honolulu; and Brent Schaefer, Round Rock, Texas, diocese of Austin.

The Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarship program was established fourteen years ago by the family of the late Emmett J. Doerr, who was an active member of the NCCS.

Each of the six $2,000 scholarships recognizes outstanding Eagle Scouts or Venturing Silver Award recipients who are registered in a program of the Boy Scouts of America. This year’s winners were chosen from over 100 applicants from across the country based on a number of criteria including service to their home parish, leadership in their Scout units and other school or community organizations, letters of recommendation and their scholastic record. “We are honored to recognize these six outstanding Catholic Scouts for their achievements as they certainly serve as role models in their communities,” said Bill Davies, NCCS Vice Chairman for Finance, who oversees the scholarship Committee.

PAPAL LETTER AVAILABLE FOR ACHIEVING EAGLE RANK

Any Catholic Scout who achieves Eagle rank can get a letter from Pope Francis. Send the following information in a letter to the address below. Please make sure you include: 1) Scout’s Name 2) Troop Number 3) Council 4) Parish and Parish Town 5) Eagle Project details with any copies of certificates and pictures. 6) Address certificate is to be mailed to for presentation.

NOTE: Unfortunately this cannot be done retroactively.
Please mail the above to:
Pope Francis
Vatican Embassy
3339 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008

Five NCCS members were honored at the Bishops Liaison’s Luncheon at the recent Biennial Conference by receiving the Silver St. George emblem. This recognition is given to Scouters for both their years of service as a member of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and the impact they have made in the promotion of Scouting within the Catholic Church. Recipients are nominated by their peers. The award was presented by the Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops liaison to the NCCS. The 2018 recipients (l-r) are: John Anthony, Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas, Roselito de los Reyes, Diocese of Orange, Calif., Bishop Conlon, Kathleen Polowski, Diocese of Phoenix, Ariz., Fr. Ross Chamberland, OFM, Diocese of Buffalo, N.Y and Fr. Mark Spring, Diocese of Davenport, Iowa.
More than 100 dioceses earn 2017 Quality Diocese Award

by

Ben Feril
NCCS Vice-Chair for Regions

There was something different about the 2017 Quality Diocese Award (QDA) application process that was noticeable from previous years. For the first time since the inception of the program, the 2017 QDA Campaign went paperless with electronic QDA applications processed electronically. Secondly, the focus was use of the QDA program as an assessment tool by (arch) dioceses and Eparchies Catholic Committee on Scouting to gauge the effectiveness of the activities they planned and promoted. Finally, the QDA Campaign time period was expanded which began on 13 November 2017 and ended on 15 March 2018. This allowed more time for (arch) Diocesan Chairs and Chaplains to evaluate their programs with their committees. After appraising lessons learned and the success of the program, the 2018 QDA program will go paperless. For 2017, out of the 215 (arch) dioceses and Eparchies listed on the NCCS data base, 115 submitted QDA applications of which 106 (arch) dioceses earned the 2017 QDA award, and we offer our congratulations for the following (arch) dioceses for a job well done!

Region 1: John V. Meakin, Region Chair/Rev. Leo LeBlanc, Region Chaplain

Region 2: Ronald Derway, Region Chair/Rev. James Lang, Region Chaplain
AD-New York, N.Y., Mayaguez, Puerto Rico., Albany, N.Y., Brooklyn, N.Y., Buffalo, N.Y., Rockville Center, N.Y, Rochester, N.Y.

Region 3: Fred Shetter, Region Chair/Rev. Michael Santangelo, Region Chaplain
AD-Philadelphia, Pa., Allentown, Pa., Camden, N.J., Greensburg, Pa., Pittsburgh, Pa., Harrisburg, Pa., Paterson, N.J., Newark, N.J.

Region 4: Pat Berney, Region Chair/Msgr. John B. Brady, Region Chaplain
AD-Baltimore, Md., AD-Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., Wilmington, Del., Richmond, Va., Wheeling-Charleston, W.V.

Region 5: Paul Bell, Region Chair/Rev. Michael Weglicki, Region Chaplain

Region 6: Jim Cordek, Region Chair/Msgr. James Kolp, Region Chaplain

Region 7: Chris Brandt, Region Chair/Rev. Mark Carr, S. J., Region Chaplain

Region 8: Mike Fratto, Region Chair/Rev. Andrew Michels, Region Chaplain
AD-St Paul and Minneapolis, Minn., St. Cloud, Minn.

Region 9: Kevin Hennessy, Region Chair/Rev. Mark Spring, Region Chaplain
AD-Dubuque, Iowa, AD-Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., Davenport, Iowa.

Region 10: Charley Raimond, Region Chair/Rev. Pat Garrett, Region Chaplain
AD-Galveston-Houston, Texas, AD-Oklahoma City, Okla., AD-San Antonio, Texas, Beaumont, Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas, Dallas, Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, Laredo, Texas.

Region 11: Lito de los Reyes, Region Chair/Rev. Norm Supancheck, Region Chaplain

Region 12: Region Chair/Rev. Leo McDowell, Region Chaplain
AD-Portland, Ore.

Region 13: Nancy Welton, Region Chair

Region 14: Phil Krajec, Region Chair/Rev. James Adams, Region Chaplain
AD-Atlanta, Ga., AD-Miami, Fla., Charleston, S.C., St. Augustine, Fla., Savannah, Ga., Venice, Fla., Palm Beach, Fla.
St. George Trek Alum to serve as new NVOA Vice President

By Phil Krajec

Jake Brillhart, a Crew Leader on the 2015 St. George Trek from Indian Nations Council and the diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been selected to serve as the 2018-2019 National Venturing Officers Association Vice President.

As an NVOA officer, Jake’s responsibilities will include promoting a positive image of the Venturing program. “I serve as an ambassador for the Venturing program nationally,” he said. “I’ll have the opportunity to travel around the country, meeting with and training regional Venturing officers.”

In his role, Jake will utilize leadership skills and abilities he learned while on the trail at Philmont. “The St. George Trek gave me an appreciation for diversity. As Crew Leader, I had to help our crew overcome regional differences - to recognize that we shared a Catholic identity and that everyone has a role. You learn to truly love your neighbor on the trail!”

Jake has been a Scout since he was a Tiger. He always wanted to go to Philmont Scout Ranch but wasn’t sure how and when. “My troop wasn’t planning a trip to Philmont but I knew I’d get there - Philmont is Mecca for Scouts. My mother found some information on the St. George Trek and, since I was already a youth leader and lector at my parish, St. Therese, and discerning for priesthood, she encouraged me to apply.

“Fr. Matthew Gray was the priest with our crew and he assisted me in the discernment process. He helped us realize that even though you might feel pressure from family or friends to join the priesthood, God could have other plans for us. He might be calling us to use our gifts in lives of service in different ways.”

Jake said the Trek also gave him a different view of Scouting. “I understand better the value of faith-based organizations to Scouting and how Scouting can be a ministry in those faiths.

“The Trek was an awesome opportunity. I met some great people who I hope will be life-long friends. I got to meet the Hiking Nuns, but I was disappointed that they weren’t wearing habits.”

Now a sophomore at Rogers State University in Oklahoma, Jake has been back to Philmont since then, participating in sessions at the Training Center. He even made a presentation about the St. George Trek to participants in the Scouting in the Catholic Church conference in 2016.

And he has his mother to thank.