

WASHINGTON STATE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

"THE SECOND EDITION"

JUNE 2016

BELIEVE

Steve Snell - Editor - 509.386.3462 - stevesnell@charter.net

Be the difference!

Never, Never, Never

GIVE UP!



"FAMILY OF THE MONTH"

SUPREME COUNCIL "FAMILY OF THE MONTH" AWARDS

Each month the Supreme Council will randomly select families that are nominated by their councils, by completing the Family of the Month form (forms must be submitted to Supreme by the 15th of the month.) Each Family will receive a Holy Family Icon from the Supreme Council.

GRAND KNIGHTS

The "family of the month program is an excellent way to recognize and support council families. Participate in the program and each month a brother knight and his family from your council will receive your local recognition and the chance to be a Supreme Council selection!

It is an awesome way to thank the knight and his family for all they do!!

*The best things in life aren't things
but the people we share our lives with*



*Like a roller coaster ride we are preparing to begin
a new fraternal year with many ups and downs
ahead of us, but God willing we will end up back
here next year where we started, ready to begin His
work again! So brothers grab your rosary and
hang on the ride is about to begin.*

(July 1, 2016)

Working
In His
Name



VANCOUVER 2016



KNIGHT OF THE YEAR



VANCOUVER 2016

WSC International Service Program Award Submissions - 2015/2016:

1. Church; Mill Creek Council 9434 - Passion of Christ Play
2. Community; Harry J. Tucker Jr. Council 11780 - HOME Project
3. Council; St. Joseph Council 8872 - Public Relations Activities
4. Family; Harry J. Tucker Jr. Council 11780 - Back to School Barbeque
5. Youth; Holy Spirit Council 10653 - World Youth Day Dinner Auction
6. Culture of Life; St. Joseph Council 8872 - Culture of Life Awareness Program
7. Family of the Year; St. Joseph Council 8872 - Arthur & Jewel Smalley Family
8. Knight of the Year - GK Tommy LaCour, 11780
9. DD of the Year, DD35, John Forest - Steilacoom
10. Top Councils - 11780 - Covington- and -14689 - Shoreline



George C. Turk Gift of Life Honor Roll – Blood Donors

**Alan Newhouse, 166 pints, St. Madeleine Sophie Council 10664
Ken Burns, 109 pints, St. Theresa Council 7908**

Pro-Life Essay Contest winners

**1st Place, Ann Marie Curran, St. Joseph 7528, Federal Way
2nd Place, Trent Magnan, Fr. McGirl Council 7907, Issaquah
3rd Place, Chris Sexton, Bremerton Council 1379, Bremerton**

MSR

Division I (< 50 members)

<u>Council #</u>	<u>Council Name-Grand Knight</u>	<u>DIST #</u>
12002	Prince of Peace; GK Ken Rodrick	29
14162	St. Martin of Tours; GK Tom Marino	12
16184	Our Lady of the Lake; GK Mike Collier	20

Division II (50 – 99 members)

13395	Fr. John Frances Laboon; GK Anthony Hutton	2
8136	Sacred Heart; GK Tony Goedde	14
11736	St. Barbara; GK Zbig Kasprzyk	27

Division III (100 – 149 members)

11780	Harry J. Tucker, Jr.; GK Tommy LaCour	27
6806	Our Lady Queen of Heaven; GK Louie Fraire	3
13238	St. Charles Borromeo; GK Abundeo Reponte	22

Division IV (150 – 249 members)

8872	St. Joseph; GK Mike Kerschen	33
10653	Holy Spirit; Bernard Ip	7
6097	Ahtanum Mission; GK Ron Gamache	6

Division V (≥ 250 members)

7528	St. Joseph; GK J. Vince Mansanarez	12
1643	Fr. Nicholas Rausch, OSB; GM Mike Colosi	4
3307	Richland; GK Mike Reisenauer	7

Tootsie Roll Awards	Council	City	Grand Knight	Chairman	Amount			
Division I Winner	12002 Bellair		Ken Rodrick	Dennis Kaplur	\$ 6,939.62	Dist 29	\$144.57/Member	
Division II Winner	12273 Calville		Craig Linn	Michael Gray	\$ 3,499.50	Dist 33	\$36.06/Member	
Division III Winner	11790 Covington		Tommy LaCour	Howard Van Erem	\$ 10,337.06	Dist 27	\$93.36/Member	
Division IV Winner	9872 Colbert		Michael Herschen	Scott Charlebois	\$ 7,525.00	Dist 33	\$35.71/Member	
Division V Winner	1643 Olympia		Michael Colosi	Ralph Marriott	\$ 7,614.31	Dist 4	\$20.09/Member	
Top District Winner								
7th Place Jerry Ross					\$ 7,276.24	Dist 25		
6th Place James Carey					\$ 7,354.50	Dist 7		
5th Place Darren Johnson					\$ 8,150.47	Dist 4		
4th Place Ahn Kempen					\$ 8,496.12	Dist 29		
3rd Place Nathan Kone					\$ 10,807.55	Dist 3		
2nd Place Dave Foley					\$ 11,420.01	Dist 27		
1st Place Stephen Sommer		4/5 Councils participated			\$ 14,005.49	Dist 33		
Overall Winners								
4th Place Overall - Division I Winner	12002 Bellair		Ken Rodrick	Dennis Kaplur	\$ 6,939.62	Dist 29		
3rd Place Overall - Division IV Winner	9872 Colbert		Michael Herschen	Scott Charlebois	\$ 7,525.00	Dist 33		
2nd Place Overall - Division V Winner	1643 Olympia		Michael Colosi	Ralph Marriott	\$ 7,614.31	Dist 4		
1st Place Overall - Division III Winner + traveling lunchbox	11790 Covington		Tommy LaCour	Howard Van Erem	\$ 10,337.06	Dist 27		

Tootsie Roll

Ceremonial Award (1st Degree Competition)

The council that scored Best of the Best is
Bremerton Council 1379.

The individual team members who received the highest scores:

The Grand Knight award is awarded to Thomas Collier, Bremerton Council 1379.
 Deputy Grand Knight award is presented to Nick Hanni, Richland Council 3307.
 The Chancellor award is presented to Robert Casey, Bremerton Council 1379.
 The Financial Secretary award is presented to Ed Hebert, Bremerton Council 1379.
 The Warden award is presented to William Smith, Bremerton Council 1379.



A GOOD DAY *(to smell the roses)*

Sitting in the park trying to cope with a recent loss, I was feeling kinda sorry for myself, I was feeling like I needed a really good day, then I started thinking about all of my gifts, gifts we all have but often take for granted. I realized that I (we) sometimes ignore the beauty and wonder of all we have been given by our Creator.

So with a little time and a sense of wonder I began to think.....

By STEVE SNELL

Beauty and seduction are natures tools for survival, because we protect what we fall in love with. When you love it gives you more imagination than you already had. Imagination makes you want more, so you can go deeper in on a path that can lead you to even more knowledge and beauty.

If you think this is just another day in your life, well it's not just another day, it's the one day that is given to you here and now, today. It's given to you, it is a gift, the gift that you have right now. The only appropriate response is gratefulness, if you do nothing else learn to cultivate a response to the great gift that this special day is, if you can learn to respond as if it is the first day in your life and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well.

Begin by opening your eyes and be thankful that you have eyes you can open to see that incredible array of colors that is offered to us for pure enjoyment. Look at the sky it is often so rare that we look at the sky and see how often it changes moment to moment. Same with the weather, we seem to look at it as good weather or bad weather, this day right now may be the kind that will never be the exact same again; the formation of clouds in the sky may never be the same again, open your eyes look at that. Look at the faces of the people you meet, each one has an incredible story behind their face, a story that you could never fully fathom, not only their own story but the story of their ancestors, we all go back so far. On this day, in this present moment all the people you meet, all that life from generation to generation flows together and meet you like a life giving water if only you open your heart and drink.

Open your heart to the incredible gifts that civilization gives to us, you flip a switch and there is electric lights. Turn a facet and there is warm water and cold water, and drinkable water, a gift that millions in the world will never experience. These are just a few of the enormous number of gifts to which we can open our heart too all these blessings and let them flow through you. I wish that you should open your heart to all these blessings. Let everyone that you meet today be blessed by you, just by your eyes, by your smile, by your touch, just by your presence. Let your gratefulness flow into the blessing all around you. Then it will really be a good day, **the aristocracy of days.**

With the help of Emily Dickinson, "a physical as well as a spiritual hermit" of the nineteenth century turned the lock for me with four lines of her "Pedigree":

*The pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee;
A clover, anytime, to him
Is aristocracy*

**So the real question for myself and for my brother Knights is:
will we be grateful & help our talents to bloom today?**

Or perhaps as my Dad was fond of saying;

"Steven Roy,"

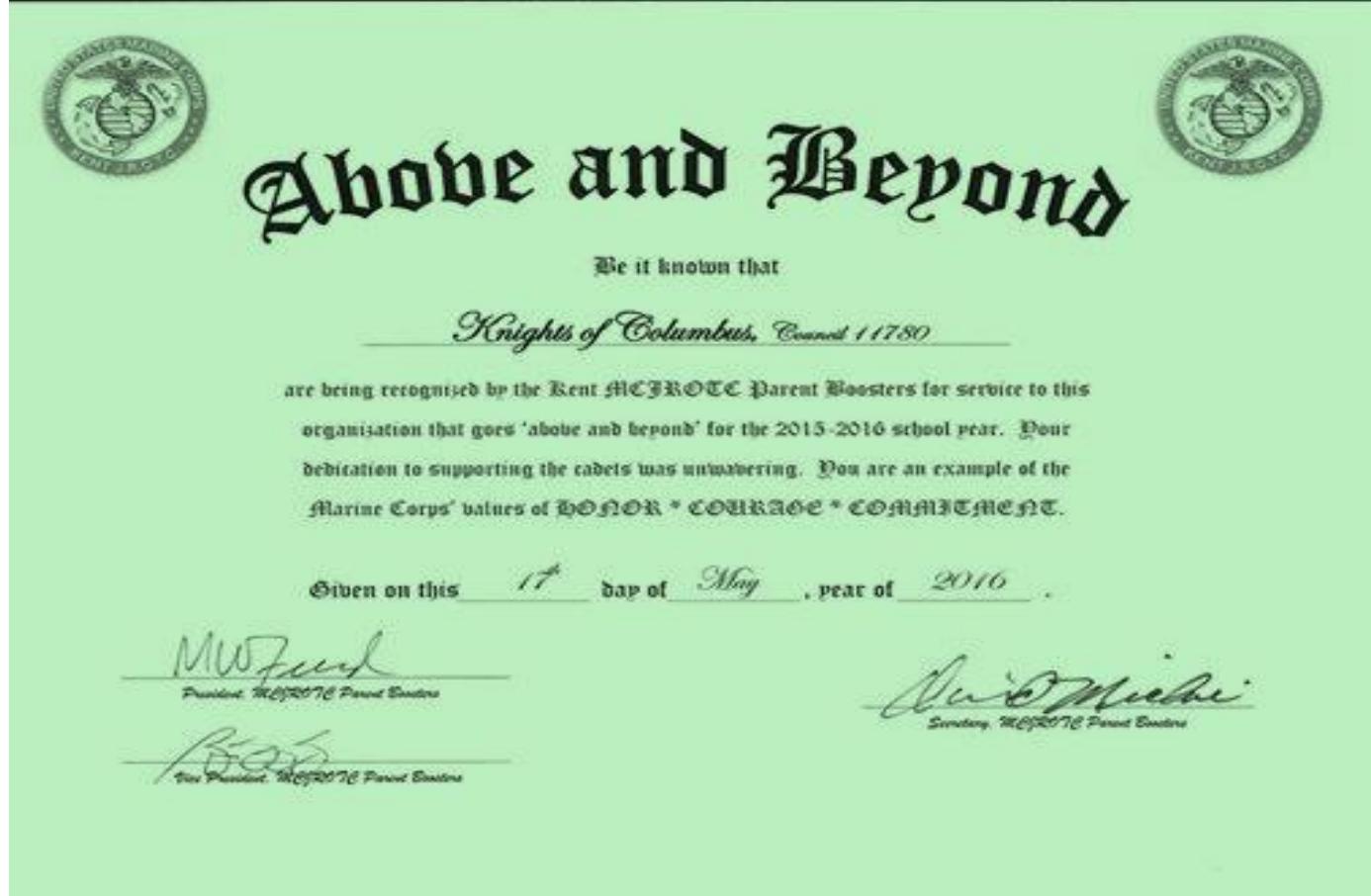
(he used my middle name when things got serious)

**"IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP AND SMELL
THE MANY ROSES IN YOUR LIFE."**

BE GRATEFUL FOR THIS MOMENT. THIS MOMENT IS YOURS.

COUNCIL NEWS

At the Jr ROTC Awards Dinner May 17th , Harry J Tucker Jr Council 11780 was Presented a Certificate of Appreciation from the Cadets for Our Support of their Organization this Past Year!



PEND OREILLE COUNCIL 14268

BROTHER DUANE SANGER RECIVES
KNIGHT OF THE MONTH AWARD
FROM DGK STEPHEN SOMMER.



BROTHER TOM STEPHENS RECIVES
1ST DEGREE CERTIFICATE
FROM GK ED ZUPICH



GK ED ZUPICH PRESENTS
BROTHER JIM HINES HIS
2ND AND 3RD DEGREE
CERTIFICATES



A good time was had by all at our annual Mother's Day breakfast as our council thanked the parish mom's for all they do to support the parish. Shown from (L) is Kathy Busskohl and Paula Dirks being served by Harry Tefft, Jim Hines and GK Ed Zupich



MORE FROM OUR COUNCILS & ASSEMBLIES

Living Rosary Fifth Sunday of May



ON THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF MAY 2016, WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL 6097 & ASSEMBLY 1171 ...prayed a Living Rosary for the unborn at Holy Family Church in Yakima, Washington. The council was able to collect funds for the three Diocese of the State program called **PREPARES**.

PREPARES serves all families from pregnancy to their child's fifth birthday, all are welcome to participate in the free services that **PREPARES** provides. It also supports the commitment to the sanctity of human life, especially in its most vulnerable early stages.

SUBMITTED BY RONALD GAMACHE GK COUNCIL 6097



TAKEN FOR GRANTED

NOBODY likes to be taken for granted.

By Manny Aguilar, Hispanic Membership Chairman/ East

Still, we all do it almost every day of our lives; in the small things and in the large. With machines and with people.

For example: We take it for granted when we board an airplane, that that large machine, weighing tons, will lift off the ground with us and hundreds of other people on board, and will take us safely to our destination.

We take it for granted when we turn the key in our cars, that the engine will fire up and we can head off to work or wherever we are going.

Where it gets touchy, though, is when we take each other for granted. When we do it, it is usually unconscious, and many a time we forget to say "thank you" to the other person(s).

When we do it with our wives, it can not only be touchy, but it can be dangerous-- with dire consequences too numerous or painful to count.

Likewise, in our councils, we can also "get forgetful" of all the efforts put forth by some of our brothers who work their tails off putting on a breakfast or some other event.

Let's make it a point to thank each of them, personally, for their contribution, especially when we weren't there to help.



Worthy State Officers, DD Directors, DDs, COs, PFCs and Wardens,

(The current Third Degree Ceremonial Contacts dated May 17, 2016.)

There are two updates;

John Rowley's phone number was incorrect. The attached 3rd Degree Contacts has his correct phone number.

Marcel Bergeron, a Presenter of the Fraternal Charge (PFC) for years, has been asked to be a Conferring Officer (CO). Marcel is an outstanding ceremonialist who is the Team Captain of the Tri-Cities Second Degree Team. When western Washington was short a PFC, Marcel has driven from Tri-Cities to assist in the conduct of the third degree. We welcome him and look forward to working with Marcel.

It is with sadness that I inform you that Kent Myles will be moving to Alaska in the near future. Kent has been an outstanding ceremonialist and a true brother knight. We wish Kent and his wife Lorilee a safe move and an enjoyable stay in Alaska where it is routinely 40 degrees below zero in the winter and in the summer the mosquitoes are so large that they have been known to scoop down and carry off small rabbits.

Request you review your information and if it needs to be updated, let me know.

CONFERRING OFFICER (C.O.)

*Marcel P Bergeron FDD, 2326 Copperleaf St, Richland, WA 99354-5013, (509) 627-5664,

marce.bergeron@gmail.com

Edward J. Caballero FSA, 15433 25th Ave E, Tacoma, WA 98445-4717, (253) 531-1249,

ejcablro@gmail.com

Karl A. Hadley PSD, VSM, 386 McNary Ridge, Burbank, WA 99323-8604, (509) 531-4898,

karlkyle@earthlink.net

Wayne C. Hogan PSD, FVSM, 109 Madrona Park Dr, Steilacoom, WA 98388-1423, (253) 581-5261,

kofchogan@comcast.net

Patrick L. Kelley ST, 4122 S 130th St, Tukwila, WA 98168-3132, (206) 375-8285,

dutch_98168@yahoo.com

Patrick M. Maloney PSD, 4015 145th St SE, Mill Creek, WA 98012-4288, (425) 483-2887, pat-

rick.maloneyn@kofc.org

Donald J. McBride PSD, 1957 Marshall Ave, Richland, WA 99354-2469, (509) 554-9202,

don.mcbride@live.com

Paul E. Roth FDD, 4121 179th PI SW, Lynnwood, WA 98037-7447, (425) 387-7049,

Paulrwa766@gmail.com

***Michael P. Rutland DD12, 738 SW 337th St, Federal Way, WA 98023-5007, (206) 419-8120,**

rutlandm@gmail.com

PRESENTERS OF THE FRATERNAL CHARGE (P.F.C.)

Romy Ablao FDD, 19414 Aurora Ave N #207, Shoreline, WA 98133-3971, (206) 399-3515,

romykofc1940@yahoo.com

Marcel P Bergeron FDD, 2326 Copperleaf St, Richland, WA 99354-5013, (509) 627-5664,

marce.bergeron@gmail.com*

John Devine FDD, 4540 NW 82nd St, Silverdale, WA 98383-9203, (360)265-0971,

johndevine4540@gmail.com

Kenneth G DeVos FDD, 2418 SW 149th St, Burien, WA 98166-1647, (206) 248-2543,

ken.devos@comcast.net

Patrick L. Kelley ST, 4122 S 130th St, Tukwila, WA 98168-3132, (206) 375-8285,

dutch_98168@yahoo.com

Donald J McBride PSD, 1957 Marshall Ave, Richland, WA 99354-2469, (509) 554-9202,

don.mcbride@live.com

Robert E McDonnell FDD, 12009 Dodson Rd NW, Ephrata, WA 98823, (509) 754-3804,

re_mcdonnell@hotmail.com

Kent W. Myles FDD, 227 E Bridgeport Ave, Spokane, WA 99207-1912, 509-868-6420,

kwmyle@hotmail.com

Paul E Roth FDD, 4121 179th PI SW, Lynnwood, WA 98037-7447, (425)387-7049,

Paulrwa766@gmail.com

Louis St Hilaire PGK, 2722 Northwest Ave, Bellingham, WA 98225, (360) 303-8671,

lfssthilair@gmail.com

Horace Suinn FDD, 3515 Shorecliff Dr. NE, Tacoma, WA 98422-2374, (253) 737-8286,

ibehoss@gmail.com

Wayne C. Hogan PSD, FVSM, FMFD

109 Madrona Park Drive, Steilacoom, WA 98388-1423

Phones (253) 581-5261 and (253) 581-5952,

email kofchogan@comcast.net





**WE ARE TOLD THAT
JULY 1, 2016 IS THE BEGINNING
OF OUR NEW YEAR!**

"HOLD ON BROTHERS!"

**OUR YEAR STARTS WHEN ALL OF US
BELIEVE IN AND WORK FOR OUR GOALS!**

**WHEN WE ALL COMMIT TO BATTLE
FOR THE UNBORN!**

**WHEN WE WELCOME AND RECRUIT ALL
RACES AND NATIONALITIES TO JOIN US
AS FELLOW KNIGHTS IN DEFENCE
OF FAITH, FAMILY, COUNTRY,
AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM!**

ARE YOU IN?

TRANSGENDER BATHROOM

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

A MAN FOLLOWED A YOUNG GIRL INTO A TARGET BATHROOM IN TEXAS, SAYING HE SELF IDENTIFIED AS A WOMAN. THE MAN'S TEETH WERE KNOCKED OUT BY THE GIRL'S FATHER WHO SAYS HE SELF IDENTIFIES AS THE TOOTH FAIRY

PROBLEM SOLVED!

The final hours of Pope John Paul II

The last time that Pope John Paul II appeared in St. Peter's Square was Wednesday, March 30, 2005. He was very weak and unable to speak. Two months earlier, doctors performed a tracheotomy on him. That was followed by two serious infections. Locals knew that his hours were numbered. Many decided to spend the night outdoors in Saint Peter's Square to show support and be near him. The end was imminent. Inside his room, the Pope said goodbye to his closest confidants.

JOAQUIN NAVARRO-VALLS

Spokesman, John Paul II

"It was a silent farewell, there was no need for words. He looked at us in the eyes, everything was already said. It wasn't necessary to try to say anything. The next day, less than 24 hours later, he died."

On the night of April 2nd, the faithful prayed the rosary under the Pope's window in St. Peter's Square. When the room's lights were turned on, it became clear that the inevitable had occurred. The first official confirmation came a few minutes later. *"May our prayerful silence accompany these first moments of our Holy Father, John Paul II, in Heaven with Christ."* That's when John Paul II received his first posthumous tribute: an endless applause.

JOAQUIN NAVARRO-VALLS

Spokesman, John Paul II

"The first prayer recited in the room at the time of his death was not the prayer the Church usually does, which is a prayer for the soul's salvation. No, it was a prayer of gratitude. Naturally, not because of his passing but because of his rich life that ended at that historical moment."

The next morning, his remains were taken to the Apostolic Palace, so that members of the Roman Curia could pay their respects. A day later, his body was transferred to St. Peter's Basilica. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims came to give thanks and say farewell.

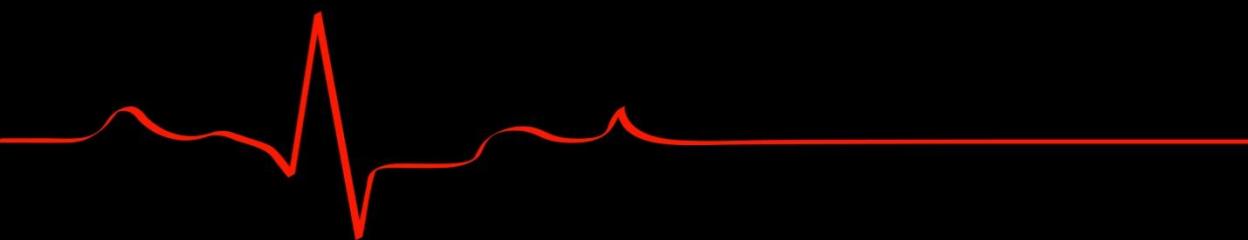
JOAQUIN NAVARRO-VALLS

Spokesman, John Paul II

"Less than 24 hours before his death, people began to arrive at St. Peter's Square. It continued to fill up over the following days. At first, Romans came, then from all over Italy. Then people from throughout Europe and around the world came in those days before the funeral and burial of John Paul II."

The Pope's main collaborator, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, celebrated the funeral Mass in front of dozens of world leaders. Strong winds blowing through St. Peter's Square added to the ceremony's sad mourning.

At the end of Mass, hundreds of people began asking: Would Pope John Paul II be declared a saint soon? Time gave them their answer.



Abortion
stops a beating heart

**SORRY, BUT I DON'T LISTEN TO
ANTI-GUN LECTURES FROM
PEOPLE**

**WHO THINK IT'S OK TO KILLA
BABY**



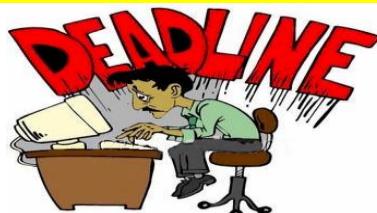
HEY YOU, GRAND KNIGHTS,

IT'S TIME

*One of the requirements for the Star Award is to submit a **Columbian Award Application** (Form SP-7). To qualify for this Award your Council has to:*

- 1) Submit a Form #365 Service Program Personnel Report Form.**
- 2) Annually conduct at least(4) major involvement programs is each of the following sections of the Service Program: Church, Community, Council, Culture of Life, Family and Youth.**
- 3) Submit a Fraternal Survey Form #1728 for the year.**

The Application Form needs to be in to the Supreme council by June 30th, 2016. This is the last day of the fraternal year so it must be **ON TIME** to be considered. If this form is late it may cost **YOUR** council the Star Award.



"SUMMER LEADERSHIP MEETING"

July 15 - 17, 2016
Red Lion Hotel, Pasco, WA



**Grand Knights, Deputy Grand Knights, Financial Secretaries,
Council Program Chairman, District Deputies,
State Chairmen, Insurance Agents.**





MY STATE CONVENTION

*(Once again I was asked to write for the "Second Edition" Newsletter.
What an honor! Thank you Steve!)*

By Valerie Baemmert wife of Robert Baemmert, State Secretary

What I was asked to write about was my perspective of the State Convention. Well, besides worrying about what I was going to wear there, and if it was going to fit, I had a few other feelings I left this year's State Convention with.

First, I loved the Awards Banquet. What a great event. I am always so inspired by the wonderful things the Knights of Columbus do in the State each year, that it makes me proud to be a Catholic and to be a part of the Knights.

By far though, the thing that is best for me about the State Convention is the opportunity I have to reach out and welcome the Ladies in the State. I think of all the wonderful friends that I have made at these Conventions and I can hardly wait to see them again. We catch up on the new and latest and exciting things that are going on since we last were together.

I get to make new friends every year too. Especially at the Ladies Program where I get to meet ladies that are newcomers to the Convention. This year I made a new friend at the Appreciation Breakfast. She is Dawna Williams from Snohomish. I enjoyed so much getting to know all about her. She paid me such a nice complement too! She told me that she has been to a few Conventions but never had such a good time ever and it was all because of our time together. I was so delighted! Another new friend! God has blessed me with many friendships and I am grateful for each and every one!!!

**GOD BLESS YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO SUPPORT YOUR HUSBANDS WORK
IN THE KNIGHTS AND I LOOK FORWARD TO MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOU
IN THE FUTURE!**

The "Second Edition" is your Soap Box!

The "Knight's Soap Box" is the "Second Edition" where you, our Brother Knights, can speak your mind. You can write about whatever interests you.(within reason and the boundaries of decency.) It's your Newsletter. Ultimately, this Newsletter is for Knights, by Knights. So if you would like to submit anything you want to share with the Newsletter, e-mail it to stevesnell@charter.net.

YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WRITING IN THE "SECOND EDITION".....BECAUSE:

Most of us read, in hope of finding beauty, truth and justice laid bare, life heightened, and its deepest mysteries probed. We are reading in hope that the writer will magnify and dramatize our thoughts, will illuminate and inspire us with wisdom & courage, give meaning to our life, and will open our minds to the deepest of human emotions, so we may feel their majesty and power?

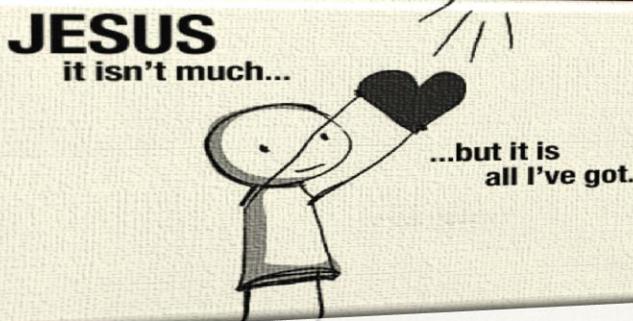
Why do you never find anything written about your thoughts, accomplishments, or interests? Or perhaps about your fascination with things no one else writes about?

Well my friend that's because it is up to you. Is there something you find interesting or have doubts about? For some reason it's hard to explain but you have never read it on any page; this is where you may begin. You were made and set here to give voice to this, your own thoughts, ideas & your council's goals and accomplishments.

Brothers here you may begin.....

REFLECTION

St. Vincent Ferrer, *priest (1350-1419)* Born in Spain, he joined the Dominicans. Academically gifted, he taught philosophy and later Studied theology and hebrew. He was ordained and became prior of the Dominican house in Valencia. Vincent was an amazingly successful preacher, converting thousands. He was also a key figure in ending the Western Schism. May we follow his advice: "Ask God simply to fill you with charity, the greatest of all virtues; with it you can accomplish what you desire."



**DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE CONCENTRATING?
ARE YOU EASILY BORED WITH LIFE?
NEED SOME FIBER IN YOUR DIET?**

**READ THE "SECOND EDITION"
EVERY MONTH
WANT TO SEE WHAT
THE EDITOR WROTE ABOUT???**

READ IT ANYWAY!



Remembering ALL of our past fallen
Veterans on Memorial Day



Oregon casualties of the Spanish-American War in the
Portland Armory, probably around 1899.



THE FOURTH DEGREE



THE GATHERING OF WARRIORS



**Western Washington 4th Degree Knights Installed Flags On ALL Graves of
Fallen Military & then Provided Color Guard for Memorial Day Mass
@ St. Patrick Cemetery in Kent!!**

SUBMITTED BY

TOMMY LACOUR DISTRICT MARSHALL, WESTERN WASHINGTON



PRAYER FOR CANONIZATION

God, our Father, protector of the poor and defender of the widow and orphan, you called your priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, to be an apostle of Christian family life and to lead the young to the generous service of their neighbor. Through the example of his life and virtue may we follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more closely, fulfilling his commandment of charity and building up his Body which is the Church.

Let the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love so that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the outcast. We humbly ask that you glorify your venerable servant Father Michael J. McGivney on earth according to the design of your holy will.

Through his intercession, grant the favor I now present (here make your request). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.)



ADDENDUM:

A *MUST READ!*





Matthew

"Mommy, I wish we had ten Matthews!"

The comment came from my six-year-old son, Micah. Snuggled up together on the couch, Micah was reading to Matthew, his 4-year-old brother. "Ten?" I questioned. "Why is that?" "Because he's the best brother in the whole world!"

I smiled, remembering our worries that a little brother with special needs would negatively affect our other children. Would they resent him? Would they feel neglected or burdened? These worries had been put to rest long ago. They were now just a memory of a time we call "the fog." It had been a very dark fog, and so incredibly thick that we couldn't see out of it. We were afraid it would never lift.

By AMY VAWTER

(Amy is the daughter of Roger Treis, Deputy Grand Knight of Walla Walla Michal Flohr Council 766.)

My husband was in the middle of his medical residency program. I was working part-time as a Physician Assistant while raising 18-month-old Micah and excitedly expecting our second child. Our world changed in an instant, when, at our routine ultrasound, our doctor told us he suspected that our baby had heart defects and wanted us to see specialists at Seattle Children's Hospital.

Only a few days later, we sat in silent shock as the Seattle doctors outlined one major problem after another. The list of problems just kept coming, and we were too stunned to process it all.

Our baby boy had very severe heart defects. Even to our medically-trained minds, the diagram of his heart looked nothing like a heart when the doctors were done marking it to show us all of the problems. The left side of his heart was too small to support life (hypo plastic). He also had a complete atrioventricular canal, which is a hole between the top chambers of the heart (ASD), a hole between the bottom chambers (VSD), and the two valves in the middle of his heart (mitral and tricuspid valves) were fused into one common, leaky valve. In addition, his aorta was severely underdeveloped – too small to supply enough blood to his body.

He also had a number of other problems, which literally ran from his head to his feet. Not only was he significantly small for gestational age, but he also had enlarged ventricles in his brain, *and* fluid around both kidneys, *and* two club feet, *and* too much amniotic fluid surrounding him, *and* shorter than normal long bones, a missing nasal bone and some other markers for a “syndrome.”

As we sat in the hospital room, reeling from shock and absolutely devastated, the cardiologist began to outline a series of four open-heart surgeries that would attempt to fix our baby’s little heart. The prognosis? Not good. Especially bad if he had Down syndrome. Our doctor told us he had seen ten babies with hypo plastic left heart and Down syndrome born at Seattle Children’s, and none of those kids lived. The surgeries might extend our son’s life by two or three years, but they had never seen a child live beyond that. And, these were children who did not have the aorta or AV canal problems that our son did.

The doctors were quick to offer an abortion. When we said no, they recommended an amniocentesis to determine if our baby had any chromosomal abnormalities. His doctors would need this information when he was born, so I reluctantly agreed. The results revealed that our son did indeed have Trisomy 21, or Down syndrome. At that point, they told us he had a 0% chance of survival. If he lived to be born, which was unlikely, he would probably only live a few hours.

“There’s really no need for you to go through the rest of this pregnancy,” the doctor told me. As my husband left to take care of our toddler, she added, “Don’t let your husband influence what you do with your body.” **“No! No abortion.”**

Despite my protests, the doctor continued, “I know you have moral objections to abortions, but we could schedule you for an early induction.” “What do you mean?” I asked. “Well, if we induce labor within the next couple weeks, the baby would be too young to survive.” **“That’s the same thing as an abortion,”** I told her. **“No.”**

Over the next several weeks, we mourned the loss of our baby. We sobbed, we prayed, and eventually we came to accept the situation. We felt as if we had already lost our son, yet we longed to hold him. **We prayed that we would be given a few moments with him before he died. My husband said, “If all he ever knows is that he’s loved, that will be enough.”** Our family and friends were all on their knees, too, and somehow this gave us some comfort in the midst of the thick fog of our grief.

We named him Matthew, meaning “gift of God.” His middle name would be Nicholas, for St. Nicholas of Tolentino, the patron saint of dying babies. We really didn’t expect a miracle or even dare to pray for one. We just hoped to hold our son.

Later ultrasounds showed the problems with Matthew’s kidneys and brain had improved and that the left side of his heart had grown slightly. This meant there was a small chance he could be a candidate for surgery after birth, but we would have to wait to find out.

Late one September afternoon, my doctor found that Matthew’s heart rate was dropping dangerously. I was rushed to have an emergency C-section. Matthew was born weighing slightly over four pounds, too weak to even cry. But, he was *alive*, and we could hold him. We sat together in the NICU, just staring into his beautiful eyes and drinking him in. The left side of his heart was still too small to support life, so with his AV canal and his aorta only 2 millimeters wide, his little heart was simply too broken to fix.

The doctors said we might have three to six months with Matthew, but we definitely would not see his 1st birthday. We took him home on hospice, prepared to offer comfort measures only. I truly felt like he was on loan from God – entrusted to my care for the short time he had on earth. I knew he wasn’t mine to keep, but somehow I felt honored to be the one to love him and care for him.

Days turned to weeks, and amid feeding tubes and oxygen masks, Matthew’s little personality was appearing. We started to see little smiles, little coos, and the sweetest little giggle I had ever heard. Yet my heart was breaking into a million pieces. How could I bear to lose this little man?

His first four months were a struggle. There were several times when I thought, “This is it! I don’t think we’re going to make it through the night.” But somehow Matthew pulled through.

When he was six months old (weighing only 8 pounds), he seemed to be getting a little stronger, not declining as we had expected. We took him back to see his cardiologists. Imagine our surprise to find out that the left side of his heart *and* his aorta had *both* grown to *normal size!*

Our cardiologist was astounded. He said that the complete AV canal could be repaired in just one surgery, giving Matthew a normal life expectancy.

What a mix of emotions! Of course, we were overjoyed that Matthew was going to live. We had never even considered that possibility, and now we were facing major open-heart surgery. We were also realizing for the first time that we would be raising a son with Down syndrome. We had a lot to learn.

Matthew's heart surgery was scheduled for when he would be eight months old. On the day of his surgery, doctors discovered that the hole between the bottom chambers of his heart had patched itself. All that was left for them to do was patch the top chambers and repair the valves. The surgery went perfectly, and Matthew spent only five days in the hospital recovering. As soon as he was home he was eating better than ever before and playing with more energy than he'd ever had.

The dark fog has lifted, and the brightness of our son has taken its place. No longer are we buried in dread and fear. Instead we delight in our healthy five-year-old who blesses us and his three siblings in ways we never could have imagined. Matthew surprises us every day. He challenges and entertains, while showing us what true joy looks like. His compassion for others is far beyond his years, and he is adored by all who know him. With Matthew, we experience a love so pure, it takes your breath away.

MATTHEW NICHOLAS VAWTER

Matthew's Miracle: The Healing of a Broken Heart



babymatthew.wordpress.com

In a world where many children with Down syndrome are never given a chance, Matthew proves that children with disabilities can exceed our expectations in so many ways. I can't possibly put into words all that he means to our family, or what an incredible honor it is to raise such a precious soul – our little miracle.

