



First Principle: CHARITY

On October 2, 1881, **Father Michael J. McGiveny** met with a small group of men from St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Connecticut. The purpose was to form a fraternal society for Catholic men, which among other ideals, would care for Catholic families that were in need of assistance. From this meeting, the Knights of Columbus was founded. On July 4, 1909, Somerset Council 1432 was granted a charter. Under the direction of the first Grand Knight **Hugh McAleavy**, the Knights of Somerville continued on with the goal of providing aid not only to the members and their families, but for all people of need regardless of religious affiliation.

One of the main events of the year is the Annual Charity Ball, a formal event where the proceeds are donated to a designated charity. In the early years, Council 1432 participated in Charity Balls given by the New Jersey Chapter 4 of the Knights of Columbus. News accounts from 1933 told of the Third Annual Charity Ball held in the Hotel Pines on Lincoln Highway between Metuchen and New Brunswick. Committee members from Council 1432 included **GK Frank Poltorak, Michael R. Dooley and Edmund J. McWilliams**. The musical entertainment was provided by Ike Sperling and his Arcadians and the proceeds of the ball were donated to the families of the Chapter 4 Knights who were in need of help to cover hospital costs and other medical expenses. Later on, in 1971, our Council changed the St. Patrick's Day Dance to the



Council's Charity Ball, to be held in October, commemorating Columbus Day. Each year we designate a charity to be the recipient of the proceeds of the ball. Recent donation totals from the charity balls have netted approximately \$2,000 per year. (Pictured at left is **GK Henry Yablonski** with Anne Helmstetter, Chairman of New Moms/New Expectations, recipient of the 2003 Charity Ball donations. Also pictured is **PGK James Trenchard**, Rev. Joseph Celano of St.

Bernard Church, Rev. John Barbella, and **PGK Jerry Nugent**). This year our Centennial Charity Ball will be held at the Bridgewater Marriott Hotel with the Organization for Autism Research being the designated charity.

A Charity Fund was established in 1971 to handle donations to various charities throughout the year. The fund is sustained mainly by proceeds from the Ad Book distributed at each charity ball. **PGK Joe Raimondo** was named chairman of the charity at its inception and has faithfully served that duty for the past 38 years. One of the main projects of the charity fund is the annual Christmas Basket Drive. Each year, food supplies for a Christmas meal are purchased at local markets and sorted into “baskets”, which are then distributed to needy families in the area. In 1923, under the chairmanship of **Frank J. Lavelle**, Council 1432 distributed 35 baskets to area families. Today, under Joe’s leadership, over \$2000 of food products are distributed annually. (Pictured are volunteers from the 2008 drive).



Another major charity function is the annual campaign to raise money for the mentally challenged. Formally known as the “ARC drive”, Council 1432 now goes under the banner of “Help God’s Special Children”. Every spring volunteers solicit donations outside cooperating retail stores in the area. Current chairman, **Tom Russell**, who followed previous chairmen **Barney Sloan** and **Jim Blair**, has been in charge for the past 15 years. Under Tom’s guidance, our Council has collected over \$60,000. The proceeds are donated to organizations that provide training, care and education for the physically and mentally challenged children and adults, such as the ARC of Somerset County, McAuley House in Watchung, Holy Cross Center of Learning in Trenton and Autism Research in Hillsborough. The stores that have been extremely cooperative with our annual fund drives are Pathmark, Shop Rite, Stop & Shop, and the Bagel Garden. Late Brother, **Pete Iloti**, was on the front lines every year with the Special Children’s Drive, volunteering at least six hours a each weekend.

From the 1930’s to the 1970’s, Council 1432 would solicit funds and gifts for the Saint Michael’s Orphanage in Hopewell, NJ. In early December, members would go door-to-door to gather donations which were distributed to the Orphanage in time for Christmas. However, there has always been more to providing charity to needy causes than collecting money. The Knights used their collected skills and time to build a workshop at the Orphanage, along with helping with other renovations. Today that tradition continues with the members giving their time to help less fortunate people who are in need of maintenance work in their homes. One such example is the project in July 2008, when Fr. Ken of St. Joseph’s Church in Raritan notified the Knights that there was a parishioner in need work at his home. The wife, Maryann, cared for her husband, who was bedridden with MS, and her brother-in-law, who also had medical problems. The home was a bit neglected because of the constant demand of medical needs. A team of Knights and friends, headed by **Giulio Capra** , and **Ron Newsom** spent four weekends cleaning

and doing minor repairs to the walls and ceiling, then giving the rooms a fresh coat of paint. After the job was done, the workers who volunteered realized that they received more rewards from the task than the home owners.

Caring for your own is the fundamental purpose of the Knights of Columbus and Council 1432 repeatedly exhibited throughout the years their concern for the welfare of their brothers. In 2006, when **Br. Greg Matejek** was paralyzed from a spinal cord malformation and subsequently became a paraplegic,



then **GK Ron Newsom** organized a spaghetti dinner as a fund raiser to help defray some of his medical expenses. The Knights, with the cooperation of the Columbiettes and the generosity of the employees of the Hillsborough and Belle Mead Post Offices, were able to raise over \$6000. A year later another spaghetti dinner was arranged to help raise funds for **Br. Carl LaTerra** who was stricken with cancer. **Dave Fritzinger** spearheaded this project, together with the help of the Columbiettes, and it proved just as successful. (Pictured above is a scene of the dinner for Carl LaTerra and at left is dinner committee with Carl).



There are numerous other charitable projects that the Knights are involved in during the year. Used eyeglasses are collected and sent for recycling to those who need them. Donations to national and local charities are made through the Charity Fund. The council collects gently-used clothing and donates it to the veterans at Lyons Hospital. Thanksgiving turkeys are donated to area families. In all, our Council contributes over \$15,000 a year to charity.



Second Principle: UNITY

The unity that binds the Knights as a Brotherhood goes beyond the membership and extends to the Church and communities that we serve. In the 1909, when Council 1432 began, we were the only council in Somerset County and were proud to be affiliated with Immaculate Conception Church in Somerville. Today we are affiliated with five churches in the area: Holy Trinity Church, Bradley Gardens; St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Bridgewater; St. Joseph's Church, Raritan; Mary, Mother of God Church, Hillsborough and Immaculate Conception. Through the Council's Church Committee, we have a network where each church is able to communicate their needs to us, along with processing our desires to them.

The most recent occasion was on June 14th of this year, when we were honored to have the **Most Reverend Paul G. Bootkoski, D.D.**, Bishop of Metuchen, join us in celebrating our Centennial Mass at Immaculate Conception Church. The mass attended by the Knights and their families, along with the 4th Degree Honor Guard, was one of three events celebrating our council's 100th Anniversary. We appreciate the Bishop taking the time to join us in Mass, as well as our Council Chaplain who joins us every year at the Thanksgiving Mass held in the Council Hall.

Another project that we co-sponsor with the churches is the "Keep Christ is Christmas" campaign. Since the 1980's, a billboard with that message is erected on the church grounds



during the Christmas season. Volunteers repair and/or replace any damaged signs, and erect them in a highly visible spot at each church. The idea of this project is to remind people of the true reason for the Christmas season and to help put a stop to the commercializing of Christmas. (Pictured is part of the 2008 crew).

Since 1973 when the Roe vs. Wade decision changed the morals of this nation by allowing the slaughter of innocent babies for the convenience of a woman's life style, the Knights of Columbus have been in the forefront of fighting for the rights and lives of the unborn. Council 1432 has also joined the fight by continuing their participation in pro-life rallies and by supporting of pro-life pregnancy centers. From the early 1930's to the 1970's our council helped support St. Michael's Orphanage in Hopewell, NJ, not only with monetary donations, with gifts for Christmas and minor repairs. Recently our council has supported Great Expectations and New Moms/New Expectations, along with support to the NJ Right to Life. Our members also participate in the annual January March for Life, Washington DC, joining members from local churches in showing the nation and Congress that there are many who oppose abortion and will not rest until it is outlawed again. For those who could not spend a day going to Washington, they would join other pro-lifers in a similar protest at the State House in Trenton, NJ.



Council 1432 also engineered one of the largest projects of our Council's history. After years of fund raising, we have erected a bronze statue at St. Bernard's Church in Bridgewater, New Jersey. The statue, titled "Tribute to the Unborn", depicts Jesus sitting on a rock holding a newborn. The idea behind the statue was to establish a permanent visual reminder of God's love



for the unborn and our duty to protect them. This project was financed mostly by donations from the parishioners of St. Bernard's with supplementary donations from the council and other pro-life supporters. **PGK James Trenchard**, who took over for an ailing RTL chairman, helped direct the project to its successful conclusion. The timing of the completion fortunately coincided with our Centennial celebration. (Pictured is the statue outside the school at St. Bernard Church).

Other projects include the long time participation of taking Vets to Mass at the Lyons VA Hospital four times a year. The Knights help wheel clients to the cafeteria to enjoy mass. Members also volunteer in their respective churches as Deacons, Eucharist Ministers, ushers and readers, as well as CCD instructors and helping with Bingo. In all, the Knights volunteer over 12,000 hours a year.



Third Principle: FRATERNITY

To foster a feeling of brotherhood within a fraternal organization, it's beneficial to have a meeting place and Council 1432 has been fortunate to have had a hall to call home. The council's first known meeting place was above a store on the south side of West Main Street. Some time in the early 1920s, an opportunity arose to own a building. Brother Knights Al and Ed Hoch (owners of a paint and framing store on Main Street) owned another building at 150 West Main Street, which they either donated or sold to the council for a nominal fee. The spacious building consisted of first floor renters, Jim & John's Tavern, a barber shop and a small store; and two upper floors that were utilized as a council hall by the Knights of Columbus. This was home for the Knights until 1978. The problem of accessibility to the main meeting room (located on the third floor) had caused the attendance to drop to 10 or less members at the meetings. There were also problems with handling the responsibilities of being a landlord. To save the council, it was decided to sell the building and find another hall that better suited the council. A former church at 495 East Main St. became available when the congregation decided to relocate to Bridgewater. **PGK Jim Dowden**, then Columbus Club President, handled the sale for the Council with the late **Tom Ryan, Esq.** handling the legal matters and **PGK Ken Blair** acting as the Real Estate Broker. The deal was closed in 1979, however there many renovations needed to be done before we could use the building. The job was turned over to the Columbus Club. Jim Dowden, President, Tom Ryan, Vice President, Joe Mattell, Treasurer, and a committee consisting of Ed Jordan, Ken Blair, Joe Raimondo, George Stafurik, and Paul Noll, Sr. to manage the renovations. They were at the club just about every Tuesday and some weekends, taking an entire year to complete the renovations. In the interim, the Council accepted the hospitality of **Fr. William Hewitt** and held their meetings at Holy Trinity Church. The renovations were completed and the building dedicated in 1980. The council was proud of the cooperation it received from the members and grateful to Fr. Hewitt for all his help, not only during the renovations but with the spiritual guidance he provided as Council Chaplain for 12 years. Now the council had a home that was easily accessible, which allowed them the freedom of scheduling events as well as using the hall for "social nights", when members are invited to share time with others in a relaxed atmosphere.

To maintain a council hall and finance the many charitable projects is quite costly. Membership dues cover only a small portion of the amount needed, thus the Knights had to be creative in their fundraising, which they have been throughout their history. Early newspaper

articles reported that Council 1432 ran carnivals as fundraisers in 1920, only one year after being chartered. Booths were set up to sell merchandise and a dance floor was available for the patron's entertainment. In 1923, the main attraction at the carnival was the live broadcast of the Jack Dempsey-Luis Firpo heavyweight boxing match from the Polo Grounds in NYC. The grand prize in the raffle in 1925 was a brand new 1925 Chevrolet Touring Car. In the 1930's, the council held bazaars at the Recreation Center on West Main St, with booths selling merchandise and Raymond O'Donnell Jr.'s Orchestra providing music for dancing in the evenings. The council also organized annual excursions to Asbury Park in the summertime. In 1923, it was reported in the local paper that most of the stores in Somerville were closed as most people went on the trip to the beach. Fifteen railroad cars were filled with happy participants on a day *"where rain threatened in the morning, but the sun broke through and before noon the weather had cleared."* The trip the next year, in 1924, 538 adults and 235 children participated where *"No one got lost and the train brought them all back early in the evening without any casualties."*

Other memorable fundraisers are the comedy shows that **PGK Anthony Bongovoni** organized in the late 1950's and early 1960's. **Br. Emmett Ryan** chaired the annual variety shows. Also in the 1960's a raffle was held for a bus trip to the Notre Dame-Navy game in Philadelphia. Later on in the 1980's, **PGK Joe Raimondo** organized softball tournaments and **PGK Ken Blair** ran a trip to Ireland. The council also manned a roast beef sandwich stand at the 4H fair. In the 1990's **PGK Joe Bernasz** chaired a committee that manned a food stand at the NJ Balloon Festival. Among the recent successful fundraisers are the Art Auctions that were organized by **PGK Mike Power**, the Ball Park Concession Stand at the Patriot Park in Bridgewater chaired by **PGK Henry Yablonski** and the Super Bowl Parties organized by **Charlie Knapp**. Spaghetti Dinners, with the aid of the Columbiettes, are another popular fundraiser these days.

Somerville Council 1432, despite all their work for charity and maintaining a council hall, always considered activities that involved the families when planning annual activities. There is mention of family picnics throughout the years of council activities, complete with games for fun and "serious" competition. Recap of the picnic of 1937 documented the scores of various contests in friendly games of skill. In the Tug-of-War, the single men bested the married men, yet the latter got their revenge in the baseball game, winning 14 to 13. In the Dartball contest, the "Germans", led by future **Grand Knight Edward Hoch**, defeated the "Irish" 14 to 11. The women were also pitted in mortal combat in a dartball contest and a Rolling Pin Derby, which was won by the married women over the single women. **Emil Morgan** was the chairman for this picnic. This year, **PGK Ron Newsom** carried on the tradition with a successful Centennial Picnic.

The wives were honored in the past with Ladies Night, which were evenings planned specifically to entertain them. In 1936, the Silvery Sea Serenaders provided an evening of Hawaiian music and in 1938, motion pictures and dancing were on the program. **GK Frank**

Poltorak was chairman of this event. The children also have enjoyed the Christmas parties that the council sponsored throughout the years. **PGK Joe Bernasz** reintroduced the Breakfast with Santa in the 1990's, with jolly old Joe Raimondo playing Santa ever since. Today, **PGK Art Beaver** continues to chair this event, as well as chairing the Easter Egg Hunt in the spring, which was started by **PGK Bill Roman**. The adults also enjoy the pancake breakfasts as well as their own Christmas party each year.

The Knights also foster the fraternal commitment through athletic activities. In the 1920's, Council 1432 sported a top class basketball team. **Earl Williams** led the "Caseys" to a 14-7 record in 1921, leading the team in scoring with 228 points (Metzlar was second with 86 points). Council 1432 also had a bowling team which finished second in the K of C State Bowling League in 1936. Today the Knights have a softball team in the Chapter 4 League. Currently coached by **Dave Knapp**, the team has enjoyed recent success by finishing in second place 3 out of the last 6 years. (Pictured is the 1987 team).



It has been very important to become involved with the community, using the opportunity to gain some positive exposure. One such time is when we participated in local parades,



including Somerville's 50th Anniversary Parade when actor Lee Van Cleef was the Grand Marshall. We also join in the John Basilone parade, Raritan, and the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Somerville every year. In 1985, Council 1432 entered a float (pictured), built by **Sanford Tansey** and crew, which took First Place. Each year since, we have marched in the parade

including this year, when in celebration of our centennial, we had over 100 people representing our Council.

Other than national awards from Supreme that are awarded to councils on growth and involvement, Council 1432 has their own "Knight of the Year" award. This award is given to a member for outstanding service and is presented each year at the Charity Ball. In 1995, the award name was changed to the "**Paul M. Noll Knight of the Year Award**", honoring the Past Grand Knight for his 50 years of active membership. "Pappy" Noll, a member for more than half of the life of the council, shared his skills of leadership as a Grand Knight as well as aiding the council with his many vocational skills, especially during the renovation of the current hall. Mr. Noll was instrumental in initiating the Charity Ball and Ad Book. By his guidance and wisdom it has become one of our biggest fund raisers.

Our thanks to **PGK Joe Raimondo**, who had done much of the research for the 90th Anniversary. We also thank any members who have contributed information; and Carl Ganz, Jr. of Immaculate Conception Church, who provided copies of news clippings from local newspapers of Council events during our first 30 years.