

Empire State Bulletin

Official Publication

Of the

New York State Council Knights of Columbus

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From the State Deputy Arthur J. Harris



An Interview with The State Deputy

Editor: Worthy State Deputy, you are coming to the end of your term, have you accomplished what you set out to do?

SD: No I have not accomplished all that I wanted to do. Mainly due to day to day issues that arose and needed attention as we went along. These items most of the time, needed priority attention.

Editor: I know that you had many highlights in your administration, including the check presentation from Megan Ajello and being named Humanitarian of the Year by the Cooley's Anemia Foundation. What other highlights of your administration touched you personally?



SD: The two mentioned of course were very close to my heart. Others would include:

- ◆ Our two pro life masses.
- ◆ The Prayer Rally's
- ◆ The four pilgrimages each year.
- ◆ The Coats for Kids program in Buffalo

Some other key things were:

New York State having Diego Saenz as an International Soccer winner last year from Suffolk.



Continued on next page

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State Deputy's Message—*continued*

The installation of the first Hispanic District in the Order and the many accomplishments that they had. Marlene and I meeting all of the wonderful Knights and their families in our travels. Their acceptance and prayers made our traveling more than worthwhile.

Meeting all of our wonderful Bishops one on one and attending Bishop LaValley's Ordination last year in Ogdensburg.



Special Olympics really got to me and the many events that I witnessed around the state that we were able to assist with, monetarily and voluntarily.



The success of our Parish Roundtable Program coming in #2 in the world.

Editor: If you were given the opportunity to do this all over again, what, if anything, would you do differently?

SD: I would have concentrated more on our membership and state C&B program needs. I would have pushed harder for the American Chopper bike.

Editor: Hypothetically only, if all of a sudden your administration was extended by six months, what issue or situation would you work on to make the New York State Council better?

SD: Membership Growth

Editor: Your lasting comments to the brother Knights of New York State are.....?

SD: I will continue to do as I have asked you to do... every day I will "Seek the Knight within myself" and continue to strive to serve our Church and our Order as Fr. McGivney would have me do.

A Call to Action

Gov. Andrew Cuomo and gay "marriage" advocates are pulling out all the stops in their attempt to end our traditional and historic understanding of marriage as the life-long union of a man and a woman. The Governor is touring the state and backing an expensive media campaign in an attempt to pressure Senators from both parties into authorizing same-sex "marriage." These advocates are planning to descend on the state Capitol in force soon in their final push. It is critical that you CALL your state Senator immediately to say you are a constituent and you are counting

on his or her vote to defend the institution of marriage.

Anyone who attended the 9th Annual New York State Council Prayer Rally (to be featured in the June 2011, Empire State Bulletin) heard loud and clear, the message above, that within the next few weeks, pressure and possibly a vote will be upon the New York State Senate again in regards to gay marriage.

Every Brother Knight of our order in New York State is urged to call your State Senator to oppose this.



Call your Senator today to preserve traditional marriage



NYS Circle of Honor Form (June 20th)

<http://www.newyorkknights.com/membership/training.php>

2630 Annual Report of KofC Roundtable (June 30th)

2863 RSVP and Plaque Application (June 30th)

SP-7 Columbian Award Application (June 30th)

The report forms may be easily located by logging on to the Order's Web site at:

<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/officers/forms/council.html>

NYS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND FORMS REPORT

# Councils	Conference	Active Membership 7/1/2010	% of Forms Sent in					Ave of Forms	--- Membership --- Progress to Goal				- Award - Progress	
			Form 185	Form 365	Form 1295	Form 1728	Form SP-7		May MTD	YTD Mem	% to GOAL	YTD Susp'd	Cir. Hon. Core	Star
52	NASSAU	15,520	100%	100%	98%	100%	8%	81%	-4	313	27.2%	225	12	2
53	SUFFOLK	10,512	100%	100%	100%	100%	36%	87%	16	215	22.1%	202	11	3
43	FINGERLKS	4,671	93%	84%	70%	84%	19%	70%	-4	56	12.9%	138	7	1
148	<i>State Warden Sal Restivo</i>	30,703	98%	95%	91%	95%	21%	80%	8	584	22.8%	565	30	6
46	KINGS	8,610	76%	72%	54%	72%	4%	56%	-352	-350	-51.2%	568	7	1
37	QUEENS	6,797	89%	78%	54%	76%	5%	61%	-13	-44	-7.7%	190	2	0
43	CENTRAL	5,339	77%	60%	67%	74%	0%	56%	-17	11	2.3%	81	1	0
126	<i>State Secretary Ken Latham</i>	20,746	80%	70%	59%	74%	3%	57%	-382	-383	-22.0%	839	10	1
40	B/M/S	5,505	45%	38%	30%	40%	0%	31%	6	19	3.6%	154	2	1
69	CAPITAL	6,080	74%	54%	39%	58%	1%	45%	4	82	14.0%	74	6	2
44	WESTERN	8,651	75%	68%	57%	64%	0%	53%	13	110	15.0%	79	2	0
153	<i>State Advocate Carmine Musumeci</i>	20,236	67%	54%	42%	55%	1%	44%	23	211	11.5%	307	10	3
28	WESTPUT	3,775	100%	93%	79%	86%	4%	72%	13	46	12.5%	86	5	2
53	HUDSONVALY	7,628	83%	74%	62%	75%	4%	60%	17	35	4.7%	277	9	1
56	NORTHERN	5,192	71%	68%	68%	82%	0%	58%	11	61	12.0%	28	3	1
137	<i>State Treasurer James Thompson</i>	16,595	82%	75%	68%	80%	2%	61%	41	142	8.8%	391	17	4
564	NYS	88,280	82%	73%	65%	76%	7%	74%	-310	554	7.1%	2,102	67	14

as of 5/29/2011 prepared by Ed Willie State Chairman Special Reports

2010-2011 New York State Council Family of the Year

Our New York State Council Family of the Year is the Rittwager Family. They were previously selected by Sacred Heart Council #4937 Family of the month for the month of September 2010. Tom and his wife, Marie, had been happily married for forty seven years. They have four children, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Their children are Anne Marie with three children, Patti with three children, Elise with two children and an adopted boy named Tyler who is seventeen. You should also be aware that Tom and Marie have taken care of 25 foster children; three of the foster children were the "Vietnam Boat Children". Their adult children are all gainfully employed, and are active in their community and church.

Anne Marie works at the Bainbridge pharmacy and served on a Shared-Decision team in the Bainbridge-Guilford School District. She did teach religious education at her church, was Eucharistic Minister and did belong to "Community that cares", a program to aid and support the development of our youth. Anne Marie has also traveled to Russia to care for orphan children living in an orphanage. She has travel twice to Russia to improve the quality of life for these children and to let them know that there is a God and that he is looking out for them. She also provides them with a shoulder to lean on and an ear for them to express there thoughts and fears and a voice to insure them that they are not alone. At the present time she is involved with the Angel Food program which supplies food at a discounted price for families in need. Her husband, Mike, is a man who cares about his community. Mike helped

build a play area in the Guilford School District. They have three children.

Patti works at Wilson Hospital as an Administrative Secretary in the neonatal intensive care unit and her husband Ralph owns a private construction business and is a Deacon. Ralph and Patti are in charge of a youth group at their church consisting of 26 teens. They also council couples with marital problems. They have three children and three grandchildren.

Elise works at the Sidney Federal Credit Union as a Marketing Specialist. She belongs to the Rotary and is a Past President of her Rotary Club and a Paul Harris Fellow. She was in charge of the coffee-social hour at her church and is a volunteer at Birthright of Sidney. Elise contributes a tremendous amount of time to Birthright of Sidney. She assists in the secretarial work, advertising for fundraisers, making copies, and whatever else is needed to assist in Birthright's success. Elise's husband, Kevin, is a member of the Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Council and is a lector at Saint John's Church. Kevin is a Forman for a construction company. They have hosted a foreign exchange student in their home and they have two children.

Last but not least is Tyler who is in the senior at Bainbridge High School. Tyler was in the boy scouts and is an altar server at Saint John's Church. He is an explorer volunteer at the Afton Fire Department. Tyler is also a volunteer at Birthright of Sidney. He became a financial supporter of Birthright of Sidney at a very early age and he continues to support this organiza-

tion with financial donations or by donating his time to clean up the area or do repairs. Tyler will be attending Broome Community College with the ambition of becoming an Emergency Medical Technician.

Tom grew up in a foster home called Mount Loretto in Staten Island N.Y. He worked in many different areas such as driving a forklift, working on refrigeration and air conditioning, process server, and after 26 years of service at a power plant he retired from New York Civil Service. Tom, while living in Whitestone NY, was a volunteer ambulance driver. At one time he was asked to volunteer to play Santa Clause for the children of the Masonville Elementary School, and of course he said yes. Tom believes strongly in the Right-to-Life and has and continues to attend the March-for-Life in Washington with his son and grandson and the Prayer Rally in Albany. Tom is a board member for Birthright of Sidney. He has given many hours to Birthright by doing major repairs, maintains the landscape at the house, and has participated in many fundraisers. Tom has also attended Ignite (a Catholic seminar given by our Diocese) for the last three years. He is a volunteer at the Afton Fire Department. Tom is also an active volunteer at his parish, he volunteers at the Church's Chicken Barbeque and Mothers Day breakfast. He also volunteered to run wires from the Church Building to the Rectory so the Rectory would have internet service, he painted the church's garage and worked on a project to update the landscape at Saint John's the Evangelist as well as putting in a garden. He is also the man the Pastor would call for repairs needed on the buildings of the

NYS Council Family of the Year—continued

Parish. Tom is also a member of Saint John's Parish Council. Tom is active in his community when a deceased member of the Knights of Columbus wife became wheelchair bound he was one of the volunteers to build a handicapped ramp at her home, when one of our members of

Marie has worked for Prudential Life Insurance, and as a Floral Designer. She worked at the Afton School as a substitute and volunteer parent on the committee of Special Education. She was also a Girl Scout leader. Marie is a Eucharistic Minister. Marie served as

You should be aware that the only reason she has stepped down from Director is due to the cancer she has been fighting for years. She has been in the Hospital a couple of times in this last year and she felt that someone needs to be trained by her while she still can to fill the position of Director. Marie and Tom were Pre-Canva teachers for eight years. I regret to inform you that Marie has passed away in January of this year. She has inspired all around her to live in God's light, respect life in all forms and to protect life not only in words by in deeds. She has always displayed in her actions that the most outstanding gift of God, is LIFE!

Sadly, we must tell you that Tom has also passed away since our Convention.

He did attend our Prayer Rally this year but a few days later, passed away to his eternal rest on May 13.

Marie and Tom and their family were truly special people and truly deserve the recognition as Family of the Year. They touched so many lives in so many ways. We are so honored to have the opportunity to thank this Family and honor their special and outstanding gifts to us all.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Ditrio
State Catholic Family Director



our council became hospitalized for several months he took care of maintaining his home and doing chores such as cutting the grass and snow removal, when Sidney was hit with a flood in 2006 Tom helped one family clean and repair their home, he along with his wife Marie delivered clothes to the shelter for the people who had to leave their home with only the clothes on their backs.

He was a volunteer at the Afton Fire Department. He joined the Knights on September 4 1996 and is a Fourth Degree Knight. He had held the position as Advocate, Deputy Grand Knight and as Grand Knight of Sacred Heart Council #4937. Tom was a member of Saint John's Parish Council.

the Executive Director for seven years and at present is the president of the Board of directors of Birthright of Sidney. She has given countless hours working the phone, doing fundraisers, speaking at community group functions, coordinating her volunteer staff and many other areas to make Birthright a success. She has dedicated herself to assist women who are faced with the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy to give them the love and support they are in need of. She gives them the education they need on how to become a mother and guides them to agencies that will help them through their pregnancy to bring a new LIFE into this world. Marie and her volunteers at Birthright are responsible for the birth of one hundred and seventy five babies and thirteen more on the way.

Securing Your Circle of Honor & Star Council Awards

Two new pages (worksheets) in the State Council's Membership & Forms report have been specifically designed to help you track your progress towards the Supreme Star Council award and the prestigious NYS Council Circle of Honor award. They are called 'Star Council Progress' and 'CoH Progress'. This report is always available to you on the State Council's web site at

<http://www.newyorkknights.com/membership/memnum1.php>

With just a month left in our Fraternal year, why not take a look at it today and see how your council is progressing?

As of May 29th, 67 councils have met or exceeded their C&B quota as well as at least half of their NYS membership goal (C# 60, 441, 443, 545, 550, 564, 599, 821, 897, 928, 1495, 1992, 2122, 2548, 2672, 3689, 4257, 4413, 4475, 4629, 4651, 4884, 4952, 5314, 5419, 5718, 6111, 6218, 6318, 6526, 6607, 7006, 7236, 7278, 7364, 7707, 7980, 8637, 8846, 9254, 9267, 9602, 10013, 10949, 11064, 11168, 11175, 11227, 11374, 11749, 11950, 12663, 13588, 13652, 14219, 14259, 14269, 14279, 14556, 14686,

14738, 14961, 14991, 15025, 15113, 15118 & 15149). All of these councils should work with their NYS Membership Facilitator(s) and/or their District Deputy to make sure they meet the other requirements for their Circle of Honor. You are encouraged to start completing your Circle of Honor form, so you can record your council's program, degree and training points. The form is available at

<http://www.newyorkknights.com/membership/training.php>

This application's deadline is June 20th, so please plan to submit it in early June.

As of May 29th, 65 councils have already met or exceeded their Star Council goals for membership and 18 of those also met or exceeded their Star Council goal for Insurance (C# 207, 293, 316, 928, 2122, 5419, 6607, 9254, 11064, 11950, 12361, 13102, 13378, 14279, 14738, 14814, 14991 & 15118). The other 47 councils should contact their Field or General Agent as soon as possible, to see if they might help the council earn this prestigious recognition (C# 60, 174, 443, 545, 550, 564, 821, 926, 1239, 1992, 3481, 3689, 4413,

4441, 4475, 4629, 4651, 4884, 4952, 5314, 6218, 6318, 6526, 7278, 7364, 7707, 8637, 9267, 9602, 10013, 10120, 10423, 11175, 11227, 12006, 12663, 13588, 14219, 14259, 14520, 14556, 14560, 14622, 14686, 14687, 14961 & 15025). Most of these councils still need to submit their SP-7 forms before the end of June and some of them also need to submit other forms.

This year every active council should complete the Columbian Award application (form SP-7). You'll find the form here:

<http://www.kofc.org/un/en/officers/forms/council.html>

Your District Deputy will be glad to help you. Since the SP-7 must be received by Supreme no later than June 30th, why not start completing that application now? Try to turn it in to Supreme no later than June 15th.

Keep up the Great work!

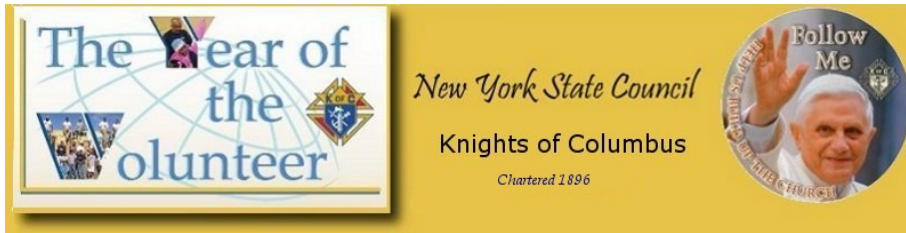
Ed Willie
State Chairman - Special Reports
EWillie@optonline.net
516-628-3215

Talk to your children about Religious Life



Congratulations to Tony and Anita Testa from Council No. 247 in Niagara Falls for being one of the April 2011 Supreme Council 100 families selected at random to receive an acknowledgement certificate and a statuette of the Holy Family from all Family of the Month entries received.

What is the latest on the NYS Council Website?



5/19/2011

[May 17th Membership Numbers](#)
[District Deputy Tracker Report](#)

5/18/2011

[May Empire Bulletin](#)
[2010-2011 Winners Public Relations Contests](#)
[2010 – 2011 Council Bulletin Contest Winners](#)
[Catholic Media CDs for Free](#)

5/5/2011

[April Membership Numbers](#)
[District Deputy Tracker Report](#)

[NYS Council Photos 2011 Pro-Life Mass\(Windows media player needed\)](#)

4/24/2011

[State Deputy's Agenda](#)
[April Empire Bulletin](#)

4/3/2011

[Obituary for Ralph A. Handley](#)

4/2/2011

[February Membership Numbers](#)

[Prayer Rally Info](#)
[2011 Prayer Rally News Release](#)

4/1/2011

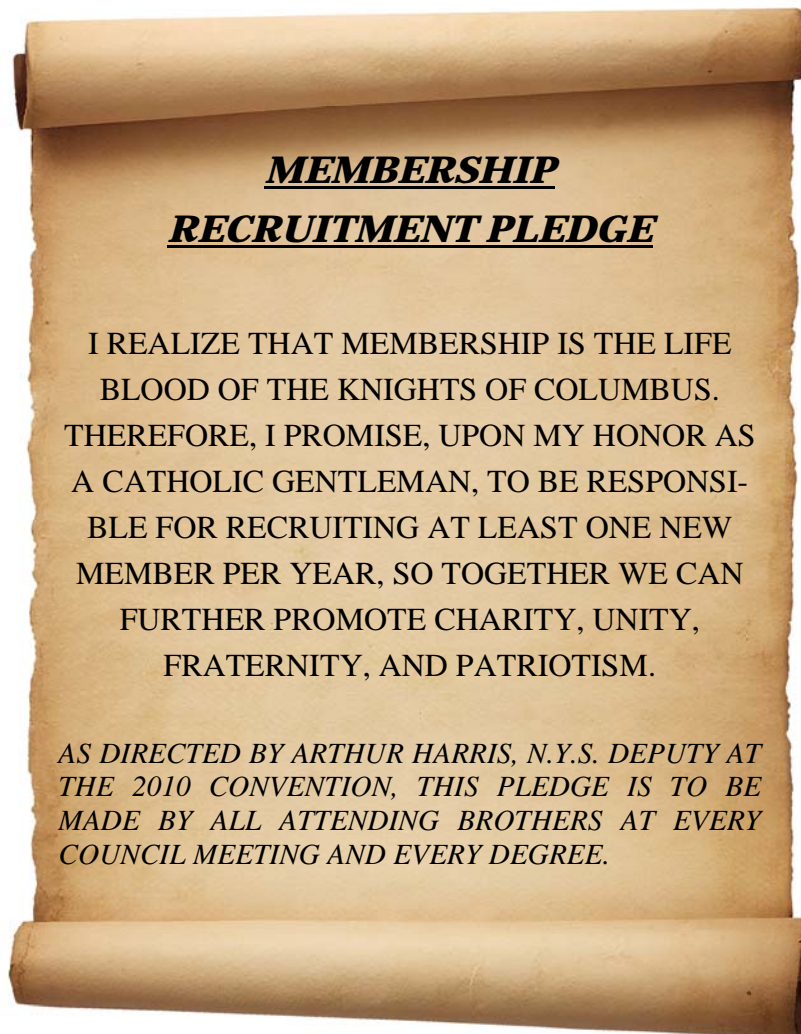
[State Deputy's Agenda](#)

Posted: 6/3/2011

5/29/2011

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[State Deputy's Agenda](#)
[May Membership Numbers](#)
[May District Deputy Tracker Report](#)

[2011 Post Prayer Rally News Release](#)
[2011 NYS Council Photo Gallery: ProLife Mass pictures](#)



Scenes from the 9th Annual Prayer Rally
Albany, NY May 10th, 2011 Photos by John T. Ryan



Scenes from the 9th Annual Prayer Rally
Albany, NY May 10th, 2011 Photos by John T. Ryan



Catholics hold rally as gay-marriage debate continues

Posted by: [Cara Matthews](#) - Posted in [Uncategorized](#) on [May 10, 2011](#)

The Knights of Columbus is holding its annual prayer rally in Albany today. Hundreds of people are praying and asking lawmakers to support them in opposing same-sex marriage and the Reproductive Health Act, which would update New York's abortion laws in the event of action on the federal level that limits or restricts abortion. The Knights of Columbus are also praying for the state to reimburse Catholic schools for 100 percent of the costs they incur in complying with state mandates, as required by a 37-year-old state law.

This is the ninth year the rally has been held, said Richard Ditrio of Tuckahoe, Westchester County, Catholic family director for the New York State Council of the Knights of Columbus.

"This year the sanctity of marriage is definitely at the forefront in a lot of our minds. We do believe that a marriage is between a man and a woman, and as a Catholic, that's my belief. And we're here to make sure our legislators understand that that's what we believe," Ditrio said as he and other volunteers laid out hand-made rosary beads that were being given to participants at the rally.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has made passing a gay-marriage law in New York one of his top three priorities for the remainder of the legislative session. He kicked off a statewide tour this morning that his administration is making to drum up support for same-sex marriage, a property-tax cap and ethics reform.

Yesterday, roughly 1,000 supporters of same-sex marriage rallied at the Capitol.

"We think that everyone has a right to voice their opinion," Ditrio said. "Our opinion is deeply embedded in our faith and we also have the right to express our opinions, and that's what we're here doing."



Marriage is a sacrament for Catholics, he said. "There are other ways that things can be handled for different populations. We have no ill will toward anyone at all. We think that they should be welcome to do what they think is right. They're children of God, same as we're children of God," he said.

In a handout to people at the rally, the state Catholic Conference said homosexual persons sometimes face unjust discrimination, which it opposes.

"But the state need not overturn the very nature of marriage as it has always been understood to address such practices. Clearly, the state can review whatever benefits or privileges

that it has through the years conferred on married couples and, in cases where true discrimination may be at play, fashion legislative remedies," the flier states.



New York Knights Rally in Albany

John T. Ryan

On Tuesday, May 10th, hundreds of New York State Knights of Columbus led by State Deputy Arthur Harris traveled to Albany for their 9th Annual Prayer Rally at the State Capitol. The Knights were only a few feet from the officers of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the state legislature as they prayed the four mysteries of the rosary and heard remarks from clergy, legislators and Catholic lay leaders. Bills have been introduced into the state legislature that would legalize same-sex marriage and further weaken New York's few restrictions on abortion. The elected officials supporting traditional values have a lonely fight without Catholic support. Prayer Rally Administrative Chairman and Master of Ceremonies Bill Ose explained, "Knights and families attending the rally have been called modern-day apostles and this describes our commitment to our God and our Church. I want to thank the hundreds of Knights and their families who traveled to Albany by the busload from every corner of our state. While we were praying outside, other knights were visiting legislators inside the Legislative Office Building." Dis-

trict Deputy David Clark, who organized a group traveling from the Plattsburgh area said, "Our people were renewed by the prayer and enlightened by the speakers. We were strengthened by all those people reciting the rosary."

Ed Mechmann, the Assistant Director for Family Life for the Archdiocese of New York, pointed to several legal ramifications of same sex marriage. For instance, state law requires that no organization receiving state contracts or grants may discriminate based on marital status. As a result, many Catholic institutions such as hospitals and social service agencies and possibly even Catholic schools receiving textbook or technology aid could lose their state contracts or aid and ultimately be forced to close their doors. Catholic institutions may also have to hire people in same sex marriages and provide them with the same benefits they provide a spouse today.

The rally speakers included Most Reverend Thomas Daily, Former Supreme Chaplain and Emeritus Bishop of Brooklyn; Rev. Monsignor John Murphy, Moderator of the Curia in the Diocese of Ogdensburg; Rev. Brian McWeeney and Rev.

Ralph Fraats, Associate State K of C Chaplains, and Sister Margaret of the Sisters of Life.

Elected officials delivering remarks included State Senators Marty Golden (Brooklyn), Catherine Young (Olean), Greg Ball (Westchester/Putnam/Dutchess), Lee Zelden (Shirley), Joseph Griffo (Utica), Assemblymen Andrew Raia (Northport), Joseph Saladino (Massapequa), Dean Murray (Patchogue) and Brian Curren (Lynbrook).

Catholic lay leaders speaking included Donna Bryon, Past President of the NYS Columbiettes; Charles "Chip" McLean, NYS President of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians; Patricia Gavin, Vice-Regent of the NYS Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and Robert Fallon, Former K of C Supreme Director and Past New York State Deputy.

The rosaries were led by Associate State Chaplains Rev. Brian McWeeney and Rev. Ralph Fraats and two priests from the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Rev. Phillip Allen and Rev. Timothy Canaan.



John W. McDevitt

State Deputy Arthur J. Harris is pleased to announce that five family members of Knights in New York have been awarded the John W. McDevitt (Fourth Degree) Scholarship for the upcoming school year. Supreme Council awards approximately 36 of these scholarships annually. The Scholarships, beginning in September 2011, pays up to a maximum of \$1500 annually. It will be sent to the students college and applied to their student account. Each of the students will be entering their freshman year of undergraduate study at a **Catholic college** or **Catholic university** in the United States.

Patricia T. Walsh
Staten Island, NY

Kelly A. Flaherty
Queensbury, NY

Meagan E. Boyd
Poughkeepsie, NY

Maggie E. Jacobson
Wantagh, NY

Anthony E. DiCanio
East Rockaway, NY



What if your last paycheck was your last paycheck?

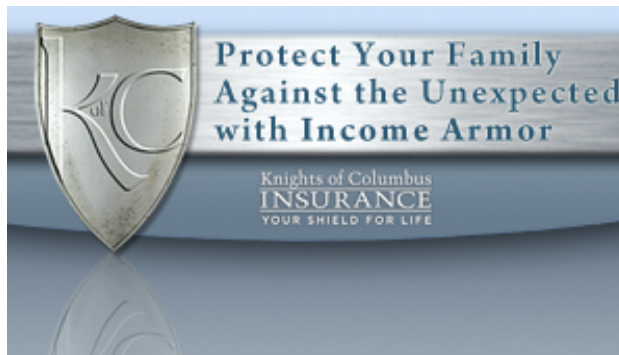
by **Thomas P. Smith Jr.**
Executive Vice President
(Agencies and Marketing)

As I am sure most of you know, the Order has what some would call a limited product line. We sell life insurance, retirement annuities, and long term care insurance. It is not because we can't or couldn't sell a variety of other products and services; rather it is because we believe in being very good – not just good but very good – at what we do, and no one who tries to be all things to all people can be very good at everything. You've heard the phrase "jack of all trades, master of none"? Not us. We're the masters of what we do.

So it isn't very often that we get to share the excitement of a brand new product with you, but this is one of those times. Effective April 1, in the United States and Canada, the

Order will offer our client base a disability insurance product, known as [Income Armor](#). Fundamentally, this product offers monthly payments to the insured to replace income lost when the insured is unable to work due to accident or illness. It is a critical form of insurance that protects your paycheck. After reviewing the product for some time, we decided it fits our sweet spot and is clearly in keeping with our mission: insuring our members and their families against financial risk. Risk of death,

ing paycheck protection?" Here's your answer: nearly one in four men can expect to suffer a disability that keeps them out of work for 90 days or longer at some point during their working years. For women, the odds are worse: one in three. And are you ready for this? One in every seven workers can expect to be disabled for five or more years before retirement. Troubling statistics. Basically, if you do not currently own paycheck protection in the form of disability insurance, and you have a job, you need it. Trust me.



yes...risk of inadequate retirement income, yes...risk of catastrophic costs associated with long term care, yes...and now, insurance against the loss of income that a disability would bring.

So the question becomes where do you get it? We saw a need for our members to have a source where they can go to get the protection they need from a strong, stable, consistently steady financial institution. Where, once the purchase is made and premiums are paid, there is no need to worry about

whether or not the company can back up their promises. Like everything we offer, you buy it, you pay your premiums, and you leave the rest to us. That's a pretty good deal in this day and age.

The first question you may ask yourself is "what are the odds of me becoming disabled and ever need-

I encourage you to talk to your agent about protecting your paycheck with [Income Armor](#).

\$50,000 CASH PRIZES

New Council
Knights of Columbus

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION

\$25,000 Grand Prize
2nd Prize: \$10,000
PLUS ... 10 \$1,000 Prizes

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Please Support
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Charities by
Selling
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SEEK THE KNIGHT WITHIN



Thank you Art
For two years
Of
Harris
Leadership.



NYS Council Boasts International Essay Contest Winners

New York had a major victory this year in the International Level of the Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest- two first place winners and two second place winners. They are:

Katie Sternberg- St. Martin dePorres Council No. 7551, Poughkeepsie- 10th Grade- 1st place

Casey MacClaren- Our Lady of Batavia Council No. 11728, Batavia - 11th Grade- 1st place

Emily Sola- Our Lady of Victory Council No.13127, Plattsburgh - 9th Grade- 2nd place

Cara Chapman- Our Lady of Victory Council No.13127, Plattsburgh- 12th Grade- 2nd place

They will each be receiving framed certificates signed by the Supreme Knight in addition to checks (\$300 for 1st, \$200 for 2nd). To salute the two 1st place winners, their essays are reprinted here. You have to admit, this is some pretty impressive work by these young people.

Katie Sternberg (10th Grade) — The Responsibility of a Catholic Citizen in a Free Society

Catholic citizens have great responsibility in today's free society. It is a moral obligation for Catholics to participate in politics. They are held accountable to use their right to vote to help form the moral character of their society and correct morally flawed laws. Catholics are obligated to protect human dignity, moral principles, and, most importantly, the right to life.

All humans are one family, the children of God. We are to treat each other as such. Catholics are called to aspire for justice, the elimination of racism, the protection of all people's rights, and peace. Human life is sacred and should be treated as such. Catholics are called to be an example in respecting human life. This respect of life ranges from the prevention of abortion, euthanasia, and genocide to the respecting of the individual body by wearing conservative clothing to the opposition of unjust war, torture, and the use of the death penalty. The right to life is the fundamental right of all people. It is our responsibility as Catholics to defend all life. We are to use our right to vote and our freedom of speech to put an end to the legalization of such horrible acts. The unborn cannot speak for themselves. We Catholics are called to be the voices for those who cannot be heard. They are the most innocent lives, and yet are killed everyday.

Catholic voters are called to examine each candidate's integrity, morals and positions on issues such as the ones stated above. Catholics cannot just focus on one or two issues. All basic human rights and dignities need to be respected and honored. A candidate's position on just one issue is an insufficient reason for a voter to give the candidate his or her support. However, the support of a specific issue that goes against the morals of the Catholic Church such as abortion or torture is a legitimate reason for a candidate to lose one's vote.

Making good moral choices can be difficult. One needs a well-formed conscience along with the virtue of prudence which allows us

“to discern out true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1806) Accompanying this conscience and prudence needs to be the courage to make the right decision. This virtue allows us to determine the morality of public policies and which actions and choices are intrinsically evil. The intrinsically evil acts are always the wrong decision. A good outcome in the end does not justify evil acts that must take place in order for the pleasant ending. The obligation of human life and dignity must remain above all other things.

Catholics in today's free society face great stress and struggles in dealing with their responsibilities. Despite the difficult decisions that must be made, all Catholics have a duty to respect human dignity, basic human rights, and follow the morals of the Church.

Casey MacClaren (11th Grade) — The Responsibility of a Catholic Citizen in a Free Society

“Ignem mittere in terram!” These are the words of the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier, inspired by the Gospel of Luke. Translated, these words mean, “Set fire upon the Earth.” Surely, it is the responsibility of the Catholic Citizen in a free society to take action and to do his or her part to advance the Church and her mission. There are many ways this can be accomplished, all in the support of the pillars of Catholic social teaching.

It is the responsibility, in fact the duty, of a Catholic citizen

continued on next page

Essay Contest — *continued*

in a free society to not only exercise his own rights but also to support and defend the right to freedom of all people. It is only through freedom and free will that people are able to find their way to God and these rights must be protected. Along with freedom comes dignity, which is the right of all human beings. Defending human dignity at home and around the world is the responsibility of every Catholic citizen. This can be accomplished by recognizing the rights of others, practicing equality and fairness, not judging others, and, if old enough, voting for politicians who support

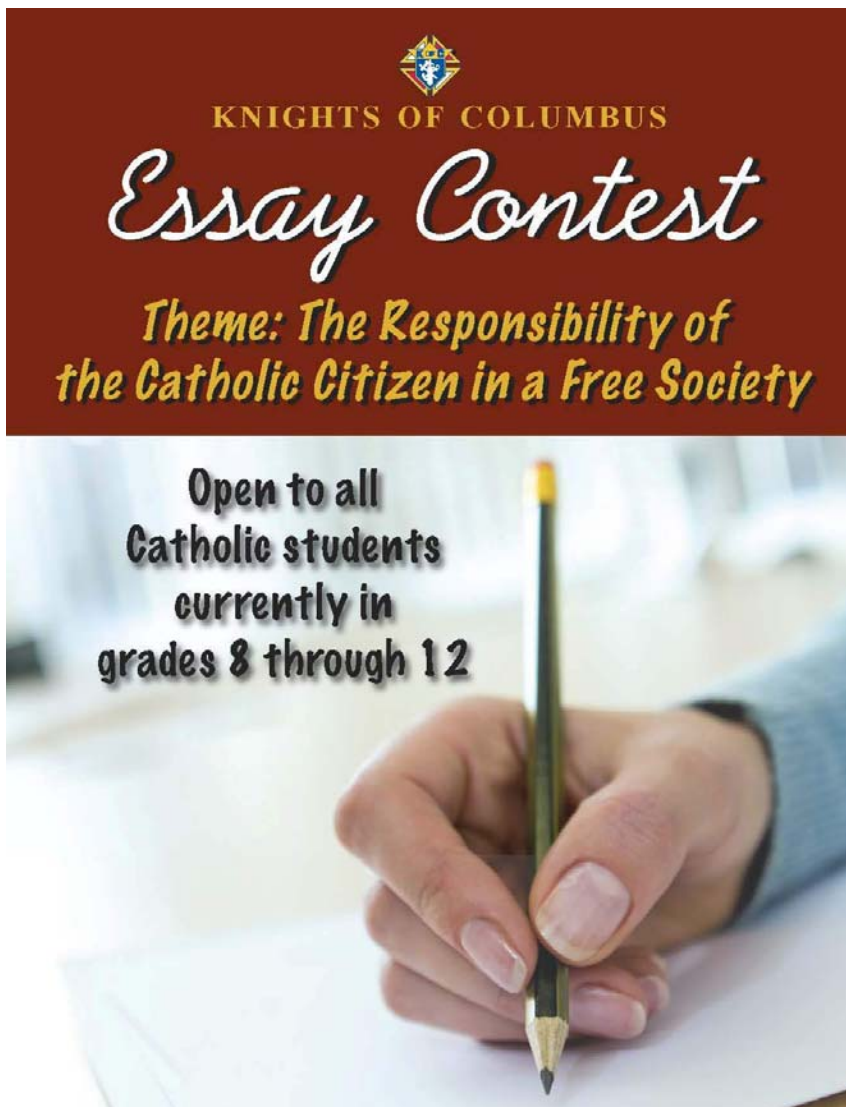
those principles. Voting itself is a civic responsibility and it is a way to influence the laws of society to protect the rights of all people, including the unborn and the poor.


The poor and downtrodden deserve respect and care, and their protection should be of the utmost importance. The Catholic citizen does not show this merely through the donation of money, but also through the giving of their time, companionship, and compassion. It is the responsibility of Catholics living in a free society to reach out to those less fortunate in their

neighborhoods, in their country, and in the nations around the world. The Catholic citizen is called upon to act globally to care for his fellow man, the Earth, and all the creatures' of God's creation. This can be done in many ways, but perhaps the most central of all is through the support of the Church and its mission.

Pope Paul VI spoke at Vatican II and in his promulgation, "Gaudium et Spes," he talked about the challenges faced by the Catholics in the modern age. The advances of technology and communication have changed the way that people speak and act. As society races to keep up with these changes, faith is shaken as people look for answers in technology and science instead of through faith. The morals and values of society are strained and stretched as people try to stay connected to the Church but face new challenges and temptations. The Pope called on all Catholics and assigned certain responsibilities. He said, "Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laymen are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit, but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society" (Gaudium et Spes 3).

Perhaps, then the greatest responsibilities of the Catholic citizen in a free society are to use that freedom to spread the word of God, to help others maintain their faith, to defend the rights of all people, and to carry out the challenge laid out in Luke's Gospel, "I have come to set the Earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing" (Luke 12:49).




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**Theme: The Responsibility of
the Catholic Citizen in a Free Society**

**Open to all
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currently in
grades 8 through 12**

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