

COUNCIL 5401 HISTORY

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We have a lot of new and old members alike that have been asking me to write a short history of our council so that they can get a feel for how we evolved into our current state of affairs. So here it is brothers, and if you have any information that I have left out, just let me know.

The Early Years - 1963-1970

Our council received its charter on May 20, 1963. Our first Grand Knight was Lionel Souza and our first Chaplain was Rev. Charles Pfeiffer. There were 45 charter members of which 4 are still members of our council--Benjamin Campeau, Frank Bogad, Walter Casler and Charles Kremer. The council met in the basement of St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic church until 1983, but as early as December of 1963 the council had suggested moving one of the old World War II buildings from Fort Leonard Wood to use as a council home. In 1964 the council received the Star Council Award under the old six point program which later evolved into the Supreme Council's Service Program concept (the six phases of activity were: Catholic Activity, Council Activity, Fraternal Activity, Membership and Insurance, Public Relations and Columbian Squires-Youth

Activity).

Ben Campeau served as Grand Knight during the 1964-1965 fraternal year and in 1965 Father Peter Walsh took over as council Chaplain and served until 1969. Quentin Leonardi served as Grand Knight during the first half of the 1965-1966 fraternal year, but military orders kept him from finishing his term. Malcolm Stewart, the Deputy Grand Knight at the time, finished Quentin's term. Rev. Mr. Walter J. Casler (just plain old Walter back then) served as Grand Knight during the 1966-1967 fraternal year.

One of the preoccupations of the council during the early years was keeping tabs on the beer and soda fund. From 1966-1968 the council had floats in the annual Waynesville Christmas parade, with children of council members riding on the floats and members of the Third and Fourth Degree marching behind the float carrying the flag. In early 1967 the council held a clothes drive for the needy in Vietnam and also sent cards to servicemen there.

Gil Rosipal served as Grand Knight from 1967-1969. During 1969 Harry Carter, a fellow brother, was killed in Vietnam. Charles Kremer served as Grand Knight from 1969-1970 and Gil Rosipal served as District Deputy.

The Middle Years - Part I -
1970-1975

Raymond Feringa took our council into the seventies as Grand Knight from 1970-1972 and Father Arthur Mersinger served as council Chaplain from 1970-1971. Charles Kremer served as District Deputy from 1971-1972. Father Michael Flanigan served as council Chaplain from 1971-1972. Gil Rosipal served as Grand Knight from 1972-1974 and Father William Ludwig served as council Chaplain from 1972-1974.

A great sadness struck our council on June 20, 1974 when Father Ludwig died suddenly from a heart attack. William Pett served as Grand Knight from the middle of the 1973-1974 fraternal year until 1975 and Father Patrick Hoffman served as council chaplain from 1974-1976.

1970-1975 was filled with a wide variety of church, community, council, youth and family activities. Some of the notable projects the council carried out were: breakfasts for the first communicants and their families, distribution of Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to the needy in our area, fund raisers for the mentally retarded and participation in the first annual Missouri State Tootsie Roll Drive for the mentally retarded in 1973 (we've participated in every one since), turkey shoots for the Religious Information Bureau (the council reached 100% of its quota nearly every year), easter egg hunts for the children of St. Robert Bellarmine parish, sponsorship

of a cub scouts pack, trips to six flags with the altar servers, dinners and dances and many other functions too numerous to mention. Another sad note during this period was the death of Lawrence Waters, a beloved brother knight.

Middle Years - Part II -
1975-1980

Joseph Lavryk served as Grand Knight from 1975-1976, James Watson from 1976-1977, Gil Rosipal from 1977-1978, Charles Wesley from 1978-1979 and Gil Rosipal from 1979-1981. Father Louis Evangelisto served as council Chaplain from 1976-1977 and Father Jerome Sommer from 1977-1986.

During this time, our council really came of age. Membership increased and our council started to get involved in more activities. Some of the notable projects the council undertook were: provided financial assistance to the nuns in Ava Missouri, donations to local seminaries, turkey shoots for the RIB, communion breakfasts, paper rose distribution for pro-life, family picnics, ordering book covers for the local schools, provided fruit and candy bags for the kids at parish christmas parties, essay contests, altar server's outings, chili suppers, spaghetti dinners, sausage suppers, dance for Birthright, Easter egg hunts, provided Christmas food baskets for the needy, painted the garage at the St. Robert Bellarmine church, float trips, donations to local parishes for their CCD programs, played volleyball to

help raise money for muscular dystrophy, sponsored children to the Missouri Special Olympics, helped establish the local sheltered workshop for the mentally retarded and physically handicapped, ran a food concession at the Lion's Club Memorial Day Canoe Races and many other activities too numerous to mention.

In 1975 and again in 1976, our council received the Century Club award for 100% growth in membership above our council quota for those years.

Recent Years - 1980-Present

Bob Belleville served as Grand Knight from 1981-1984, Ben Campeau from 1984-1986, Gil Rosipal from 1986-1987 and Paul Kremer from 1987-Present. Father Jerome Sommer continued to serve as Chaplain until 1986, Father Thomas Dolan served as Chaplain from 1986-1988 and Father John Pender from 1988-Present.

In recent years our council has continued to be very active in the local community and the parishes we serve. In addition to the activities mentioned above, our council took on more such as painting the fire hydrants in Waynesville, purchasing 6 wheelchairs for loan in our area, helping the flood victims during the 100 year flood of 1982, holding meals for the local Fourth Degree assembly, holding annual auctions to pay off the debt on our council hall, picking up trash along an adopted stretch of highway and sponsoring a seminarian through the K of C Supreme Council Refund Support Vacations

Program.

In June of 1983, the land for our council home was found. The terms of sale: \$9000 down payment and \$9000 to be paid back at \$150 per month at no interest. Our Advocate, Charles Wesley took care of the legal work and suggested the formation of St. Robelminco Inc. to raise the \$9000 needed for the down payment. Today, the \$9000 at \$150 per month has already been paid and only \$4000 is still owed St. Robelminco Inc. Thanks to the generous donations of time and money of several brother Knights during the past 7 years, our council hall has transformed from a decaying old hotel unfit to stay the night in to a very comfortable hall for holding meetings, dinners, dances and other social activities.

With the formation of a Ladies Auxiliary Circle in 1986 the wives of members started to become more involved in our mission. Charles Wesley served as our District Deputy from 1980-1981 and as the State Advocate from 1984-1985, and Frank Bogad received state council Knight of the Month honors in 1984. In 1988, our council celebrated its 25th anniversary in addition to winning the Star Council and Vocation Sponsor awards. In addition, the family of Charles Kremer was selected as one of the Supreme Council Family of the Month winners during 1988. In 1989, our council won its third Star Council award and its second Vocation Sponsor award. Our membership increased during this period also—we now have 110 members.

